Archaeology of Islam

Traces of Makkah, Islam, and Its Earliest Accounts

Compiled and Annotated by: Aḥmad Ḥasan

Translated by: Abdullah Sueidi

HASEEN
CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND STUDIES

Othman Endowment

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Haseen Research and Studies Center

Location: Kuwait – Al-Rawda
District – Shihab
Ahmad Al-Bahr Street

Email: info@haseenkwt.com

Mobile: +965 66407470

Website: www.haseenkwt.com

@HaseenKWT

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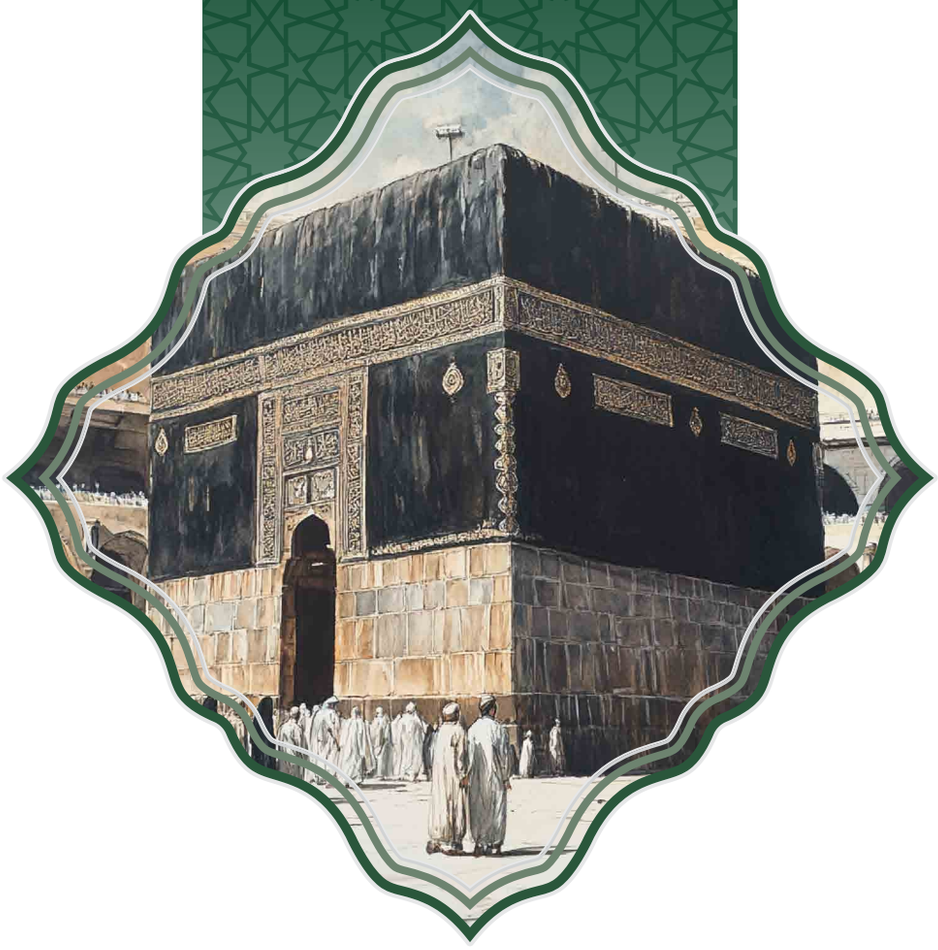

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In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

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Haseen Center's Foreword

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds. May peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muḥammad, his family, and his companions.

In an age marked by competing worldviews and profound questions about existence, meaning, and morality, the Islamic perspective stands out for its harmony between reason and revelation, intellect and faith, evidence and innate disposition.

Haseen Center is dedicated to confronting intellectual and ideological deviations by nurturing faith and producing educational and research-based materials through modern methods—helping build resilient and tranquil communities grounded in sound knowledge and belief.

Guided by this vision, Haseen Center for Research and Studies in Kuwait has launched this translation project to present select contemporary Arabic works on the proofs and virtues of Islam, as well as critique of atheism and secularism, to English-speaking audiences. The aim is to provide both Muslims and non-Muslims with authentic insights into how Islamic scholarship addresses questions of belief, doubt, and the human quest for meaning.

The translated works range from concise essays by renowned scholars, distinguished for their intellectual depth, to academic studies by specialized researchers, appreciated for their analytical rigor. Together, they reflect the breadth and vitality of contemporary Islamic scholarship—where reasoned argument is harmonized with the guidance of revelation.

The translation team has endeavored to ensure accuracy, clarity, and fidelity to the original texts, while preserving their tone and context, and clarifying concepts that may be unfamiliar to non-Arabic readers.

These works invite fair-minded reflection and sincere dialogue in the pursuit of truth. For in Islam, faith in Allah is both rational and innate, a conviction that fills life with peace and purpose.

This project has been made possible—by the grace of Allah—and through the generous support of the Endowment of Eisa Abdula Abdul Aziz ALothman (may Allah have mercy on him), whose contribution embodies a noble commitment to knowledge and to spreading the light of understanding across the world.

May Allah bless this endeavor, make it fruitful, and guide all seekers of truth to what is right and good.

HASEEN
CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND STUDIES

Translator's Introduction

In an era where historical narratives are frequently challenged and distorted, the steadfastness of truth often emerges from the tangible echoes of the past. *Archaeology of Islam: Traces of Makkah, Islam, and Its Earliest Accounts*, compiled and annotated by Aḥmad Ḥasan stands as a critical testament to this enduring reality. This book embarks on an illuminating journey through archaeological discoveries and historical records, meticulously piecing together the verifiable origins and early spread of Islam.

The need for such a work is more urgent than ever. In recent decades, certain revisionist narratives, often cloaked in academic pretense, have sought to undermine the very foundations of Islamic history. From questioning the historical existence of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ to denying the established location of Makkah, these attempts sow doubt and confusion, particularly among those unfamiliar with the rigorous historical methodology employed within Islamic scholarship.

Ḥasan confronts these challenges head-on. Through a compelling array of early Islamic inscriptions—carved into stone and rock—dating back to the Prophet's era and the Rightly Guided Caliphate, he presents irrefutable physical evidence that corroborates traditional accounts. The book further delves into preserved letters and treaties exchanged between the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his Companions, and contemporary kings and leaders, offering a vivid glimpse into the nascent Islamic state's interactions with the world.

A significant portion of *Archaeology of Islam* is dedicated to examining how non-Muslim civilizations of the time—from Byzantium and Persia to China—recorded the advent of Islam. By presenting these external testimonies, often from sources that might otherwise be critical, the author powerfully reinforces the undeniable historical presence and rapid expansion of Islam. Furthermore, Ḥasan meticulously dissects and refutes the methodologies of Orientalists who have deliberately manipulated historical and geographical facts, exposing their biases and flawed reasoning.

This book is an invaluable resource for anyone seeking a deeper, evidence-based understanding of Islam's origins. It is a work that not only defends history but also empowers readers with the knowledge to discern truth from falsehood in a complex world. As a translator, I have strived to render Ḥasan's meticulous research and compelling arguments with the clarity and precision they deserve. It is my sincere hope that this translation will serve as a definitive reference, affirming the rich and verifiable historical heritage of Islam for a global audience.

Abdullah Sueidi

Introduction

Throughout human history, countless minds have emerged to shape the thinking of millions of people—whether toward good or evil. A discerning person seeks to examine these ideas through the lens of sound reason and upright judgment, assessing how well they align with intellect and innate human nature, and whether they are internally consistent or riddled with contradiction.

This is why there is an urgent need for works like this series, *Intellectual Theses*.

In this particular book, Eng. Aḥmad Ḥasan takes us on a journey through various historical sources that document the early material traces of Islam. These include inscriptions carved into stones and rocks dating back to the Prophet's time, as well as letters exchanged between the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his Companions, and the surrounding kings and leaders.

The book also explores how non-Muslim nations of the time recorded the emergence of the Prophet and the spread of his message, along with the military campaigns led by his Companions. Additionally, it reviews the most well-known responses to those who question the existence or significance of Makkah before and after Islam. This includes uncovering the methods used by certain Orientalists who seek to cast doubt on well-established historical and geographical facts.

Published by: Markaz Dalāʾil

Foreword

At the dawn of the twentieth century, a convergence of scientific and philosophical developments contributed significantly to the decline of Christianity in the West and the rise of secularism and atheism. Among the most notable of these developments was the questioning of the very existence of Jesus (peace be upon him)[1].

Dozens of historical studies have demonstrated the inconsistencies and alterations that occurred in the copying and translation of the Gospels, which opened the floodgates for even broader criticism—namely, casting doubt on the entire religion. Critics exploited these weak foundations, which crumble under the simplest academic scrutiny, to attack Christianity at its core.

As the foundational claim—belief in the existence of Jesus—began to collapse, people in the West started abandoning religion altogether, both individually and collectively. This, in turn, highlighted the power of a particular method: targeting the historical roots of a religion in order to undermine it and shake the faith of its followers. After all, without Jesus, there can be no Christianity.

Just as Western Christians were harmed by such attacks, some among them chose to apply the same approach to Islam. Under the guise of *Orientalism*[2], they began spreading doubts and falsehoods aimed at undermining the historical and geographical foundations of Islam. Some even went so far as to question the very existence of the Prophet Muḥammad himself , despite the fact that the historical evidence for the Prophet, his Companions, the rise of Islam, and its accompanying letters to kings, battles, and conquests is far more robust—by any academic standard—than the evidence for Jesus (peace be upon him)!

---

(1) For example, the Christ myth theory. See Chapter Five.

(2) Orientalism refers to the body of academic studies—mainly European and American—concerned with the civilizations, religions, cultures, and histories of the East. Unfortunately, most of these studies were not produced out of neutral scholarly interest, but rather with the aim of distorting facts and misrepresenting Eastern religions and histories to Western audiences—most of whom have never visited those lands or lived among their people. That said, there are a few fair-minded exceptions, as will be seen in this book.

One might feel embarrassed even to address such claims, were it not for the credibility falsely lent to them by the impressive titles of those who promote them—"Orientalist," "Professor," and so on—and their inclusion in Western universities as part of official curricula in fields such as *Middle Eastern Studies* or *Islamic History*. When coupled with media promotion, the danger becomes real: even children, teens, and young adults from our own Ummah may be exposed to these distortions, particularly those who have not received the kind of sound education or purposeful media exposure that would help them detect such deception cloaked in the name of scholarship.

It was in light of all this that I initially wrote an article on my blog in 2015, where I compiled and translated information and images related to the earliest material traces of Islam. I also included brief responses to some of the modern doubts raised against the Qurʾān, especially those that emerged after the discovery of the Ṣanʿāʾ manuscripts in Yemen. By the grace of Allah, the article garnered attention from several people engaged in such discussions—even though the content was quite modest in scope. Some brothers shared it through the "Muslim Researchers" initiative on Facebook in their September post No. 768 of that year, and it was later republished on their official website(1).

Since then, I have seen multiple individuals and scholars refer to it or cite it in forums and blogs. For that reason, I decided to present the material once more—this time in the form of a dedicated book in which I expand on the sources, images, and translations (with the exception of Chapter 3, where I received help from Dr. Jād Allāh al-Sayyid Maḥmūd). I also address several important works, including:

1) The article by the renowned Indian scholar Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh, published in the *Islamic Culture* journal (Vol. XII, October 1939), in which he presented images of inscriptions discovered in Saudi Arabia that date back to the Prophet and his Companions.

2) His famous book that compiled over 370 texts, documents, and letters from the Prophet, his Companions, and the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, titled *al-Wathāʾiq al-Siyāsiyyah li-l-ʿAhd al-Nabawī wa-l-Khilāfah al-Rāshidah* ("The Political Documents of the Prophetic Era and the Rightly Guided Caliphate"). This work was based on his doctoral dissertation at the Sorbonne University in 1935 and was first published in Arabic in Egypt in 1941.

3) I also include selected excerpts from *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* by Robert G. Hoyland, published in 1997. Despite the shock that the rapid spread of Islam caused among Jews and Christians of that era—leading many of them to distort its image by describing it either as divine punishment for their

(1) Latest available link: https://muslims-res.com/768.html

sins or as a prelude to the Antichrist—the nearly 120 quoted texts in Hoyland's book collectively offer compelling evidence of non-Muslim acknowledgment of the Prophet's emergence and the rise of Islam. These writings provide valuable documentation of the period between 620 CE and 780 CE. In this book, I will focus on those voices among them who were more objective, distancing themselves from the exaggerations and misrepresentations found in the writings of others.

4) I also present critiques by leading Western scholars of the fabrications and distortions propagated by the Orientalist Patricia Crone. Crone sought to manipulate both history and geography in astonishing ways, going so far as to deny the existence of Makkah in its well-known location, and even the very existence of the Prophet ﷺ himself. I will share excerpts from the work of Dr. Āmāl Muḥammad al-Rūbī, written in response to Crone's book *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, in order to expose the deceptive methods and tools employed in such historical distortions.

Additionally, I have greatly benefited from one of the most prominent English-language websites dedicated to defending Islam and providing access to foreign academic sources and well-documented references[1].

I have also retained my original title—*Archaeology of Islam*—since the term *archaeology* refers to the study of ancient human civilizations and cultures, especially its historical branch, which deals with inscriptions and tangible written records.

Lastly, I would be happy to provide any of the images included in this book in their original resolution upon request. Some of the details may not appear clearly in the printed version, especially in black and white. You can reach me by email at: Ahmad271119@gmail.com.

—Aḥmad Ḥasan

(1) https://www.islamic-awareness.org

Cover Image

The book's cover features an image of what is believed to be the earliest known archaeological inscription—dating back to 4 or 5 AH (after Hijrah)[1]—that documents the name of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his Companions. It was discovered on Mount Silaʿ in al-Madīnah. On the right side of the inscription, we can clearly see the names of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with them), while on the left, the names of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allah be pleased with him), and several other Companions are visible.

(See Chapter One for more details.)

(1) M. Hamidullah, "Some Arabic Inscriptions Of Medinah Of The Early Years Of Hijrah", Islamic Culture, 1939, Volume XIII, p. 438

Chapter One: Archaeological Inscriptions Documenting the Prophet and His Companions

These inscriptions are among the most powerful physical traces confirming the historical presence of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the early period of Islam. The study of inscriptions—known as *epigraphy* (Arabic: *ʿilm al-nuqūsh* or *Epigraphia*)—is one of the most fascinating disciplines that connects the past with the present. It investigates each inscription to uncover when it was written, who authored it, the context in which it was produced, and its artistic, political, cultural, and religious implications, along with the evolution of its script and lettering.

Although such inscriptions are extremely rare and often damaged by time, erosion, or human tampering, there are dedicated scholars who specialize in their identification and study. One of the most detailed works on this subject is the 1994 book *al-Nuqūsh al-ʿArabiyyah al-Mubakkirah bi-Manṭiqat al-Ṭāʾif* ("Early Arabic Inscriptions in the Ṭāʾif Region") by Dr. Nāṣir ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥārithī, Assistant Professor of Archaeology and Islamic Art at Umm al-Qurā University. Dr. al-Ḥārithī conducted extensive field research for nearly nine months, covering dozens of sites in the Ṭāʾif region of Saudi Arabia, in cooperation with various archaeological institutions and individuals (all mentioned in the introduction of his book, p. 8).

Also notable is the article by the renowned Indian scholar Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh, published in the journal *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XIII, October 1939 (pp. 427–439), titled: *Some Arabic Inscriptions of Medinah of the Early Years of Hijrah.*

In this article, he presented photographs of several inscriptions discovered in and around al-Madīnah (formerly Yathrib), which date back to the Prophet's era and refer directly to him and his Companions. We will examine a selection of these inscriptions, along with some additional ones.

Inscriptions in al-Madīnah Mentioning the Prophet and His Companions – 4 AH

One of the earliest inscriptions is located on Mount Silaʿ in al-Madīnah. The engraving appears in two distinct parts—right and left. Below is a line-by-line transcription, with the diacritical markings added editorially for clarity.

Right side of the inscription:

1. Ḥakīm
2. and he believes in
3. ʿUmar, son of
4. Bakr

This likely refers to the names of the Companions Abū Bakr and ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with them), suggesting it was written either by someone affirming his loyalty to them or in reference to their authority.

Left side of the inscription:

I am ʿAmārah (Referring to the Companion ʿAmārah ibn Ḥazm, as indicated by the next line)

2. Ibn Ḥazm – I am

3. Maymūn ...

4. I am Muḥammad ibn — (referring to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, confirmed in the next line)

5. ʿAbd Allāh – I am M[uslim] (likely Muslim ibn ʿAwsajah)

6. Ibn ʿAwsajah

7. I am Khalaf

8. I am Sulaymān al-Aṣfar (or al-Aḥmar? Possibly Salmān al-Fārisī) – I am

9. I am Sahl ibn ... (possibly Saʿd ibn Saʿd)

10. I am Maʿqil al-Juhanī – [I seek r]efuge ...

11. O Allah ... I ... I am ...

12. I am Saʿd ibn Muʿdh (Muʿādh)

13. ... ibn ʾ... – I am

14. ... (unclear)

15. I am ʿAlī ibn Abū Ṭālib

16. Muḥammad

The writing style in this inscription differs significantly from later standardized forms. Notably:

- Absence of diacritical dots and vowel markings, a feature typical of early Arabic writing.
- Spelling variations, such as “Maʿdh” instead of “Muʿādh,” and a lack of elongated letters (like alif), reflect the early Qurʾānic script style.
- Uninflected names, such as “Abū Ṭālib”, remain unchanged despite grammatical position (“ʿAlī ibn Abū Ṭālib” instead of “Abī Ṭālib”), which indicates that early Arabs often treated well-known names as fixed entities, regardless of syntax.

This could subtly support one of the scholarly explanations for the Qurʾān being revealed in *seven aḥruf*—seven modes of reading or expression—mentioned in both *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. It reflects the diversity of pronunciation and orthography present among the Arab tribes of that time.

Several feet (foot = 30.5 cm) below the main inscription, another group of phrases appears:

1. May Allah accept ʿUmar
2. Allah acts [as He wills]
3. ʿUmar [is granted] forgiveness

And another inscription reads:

1. The believers – join [me] with the righteous

2. May Allah make ʿUmar among the people of Paradise
3. [And] Abū Bakr [is among] the deeds of the believers

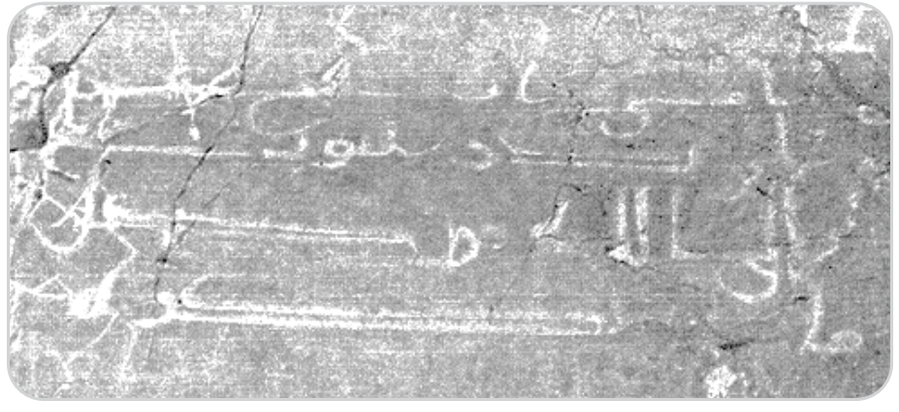
This inscription was cited by the renowned Indian scholar Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh in his article in *Islamic Culture*[1], which we referenced earlier. He considered it likely that the inscription was written by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him), who was among the few individuals at that time capable of writing. In his book *al-Wathāʾiq al-Siyāsiyyah* (p. 32), Ḥamīd Allāh suggests the inscription was likely engraved in 5 AH, not 4 AH.

He speculates that the Prophet ﷺ may have passed by some of his Companions while they were carving their names for remembrance during the Battle of the Trench (*Ghazwat al-Khandaq*), and he instructed them to include his name as well.

On the other hand, Yāsīn Ḥāmid Ṣafadī, a scholar specializing in Islamic calligraphy and Islamic art, dates the script to approximately 4 AH / 625 CE[2].

In contrast, George Miles casts doubt on the theory that the inscription was authored by ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him), though he does not offer conclusive evidence against it[3].

Although the inscription is in Ḥijāzī script, which some consider the precursor to the Kufic script, Grohmann, a specialist in the development of Arabic and Islamic calligraphy, views it as a form of early Kufic due to its striking resemblance to the earliest Kufic scripts used in Qur'ānic manuscripts[4].



(1) M. Hamidullah, "Some Arabic Inscriptions Of Medinah Of The Early Years Of Hijrah", Islamic Culture, 1939, Volume XIII, p. 438

(2) Y. H. Safadi, Islamic Calligraphy, 1979, Shambhala Publications, Inc.: Boulder (Colorado), p. 15

(3) G. C. Miles, "Early Islamic Inscriptions Near Ta'if In The Hijaz", Journal Of Near Eastern Studies, 1948, Volume VII, p. 240

(4) A. Grohmann, "The Problem Of Dating Early Qur'ans", Der Islam, 1958, p. 221

As for the second inscription[1] from Mount Salʿ in al-Madīnah, it is dated to the same period (4 AH = 625 CE), and reads:

1. Evening and morning, ʿUmar
2. and Abū Bakr turn (in repentance? supplication?)
3. to Allah from all
4. that He dislikes.

The third inscription[2], also from the same region at Mount Salʿ in al-Madīnah and dated to the 1st century AH, reads:

1. .... (unclear)
2. I bear witness that there is no deity
3. [except A]llah, and I bear witness that that (repeated) Muḥammad is His servant
4. [and His Mess]enger. By Your mercy, O Allah, there is no deity but
5. [He. In] Allah I place my trust, and He is the Lord
6. .... of the Mighty Throne.

Archaeological Inscriptions Related to ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (23–24 AH)

These inscriptions are from various locations in the Ḥijāz, the broader Arabian Peninsula, and surrounding regions following the Islamic conquests. Here, only the most well-known examples are presented:

(1) M. Hamidullah, “Some Arabic Inscriptions Of Medinah Of The Early Years Of Hijrah”, Islamic Culture, 1939, Volume XIII

(2) M. Hamidullah, “Some Arabic Inscriptions Of Medinah Of The Early Years Of Hijrah”, Islamic Culture, 1939, Volume XIII

An inscription bearing the name of the Rightly Guided Caliph ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him) was found in the Najrān region of Saudi Arabia, dating to the year 23 AH = 644 CE. It was discovered in 2012 by a joint French-Saudi archaeological team[1].

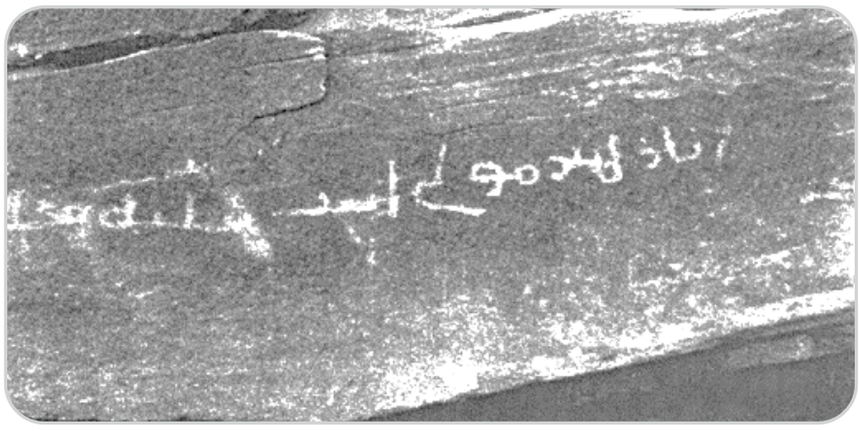
Another notable inscription, known as *Naqsh Zuhayr* (Zuhayr Inscription), is named after its author. It records the death of Caliph ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him) in 24 AH = 644 CE. This inscription is significant for its early use of diacritical marks (dots) on certain letters, predating what some specialists and Orientalists had assumed:

Below is a line-by-line rendering of the inscription:

1. In the name of Allah
2. I am Zuhayr. I wrote [this] at the time ʿUmar died, in the year twenty-
3. four.

Near the inscription, another line is found:

(1) F. Imbert, “Graffiti Arabes De Cnide Et De Kos: Premières Traces Épigraphiques De La Conquête Musulmane En Mer Égée”, Travaux Et Mémoires, 2013, Volume 17, pp. 757-758.



“I am Zuhayr, the client (*mawlā*) of the daughter of Shaybah.[1]”

In the footnotes on the previous page, we noted the presence of Robert G. Hoyland, whose book compiling non-Muslim testimonies about the emergence of Islam and its early conquests will be reviewed in Chapter Three. Hoyland is a specialist in this subject and has closely studied Islamic archaeological traces, particularly those from the first century AH.

Archaeological Inscription of One of ʿUmar’s Endowments in Palestine (16–40 AH)

This inscription is written in a simple Kufic script, which allows it to be dated between 637 CE—when the Rightly Guided Caliph ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) received the keys to Jerusalem—and approximately 660 CE, when the writing style shifted to the more rounded Kufic script during the caliphate of ʿAlī (may Allah be pleased with him). The inscription was discovered in the al-ʿUmarī Mosque in the village of Nūbā, located in the Hebron Hills of Palestine. The current building is modern and was built on the site of an older mosque attributed to ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him).

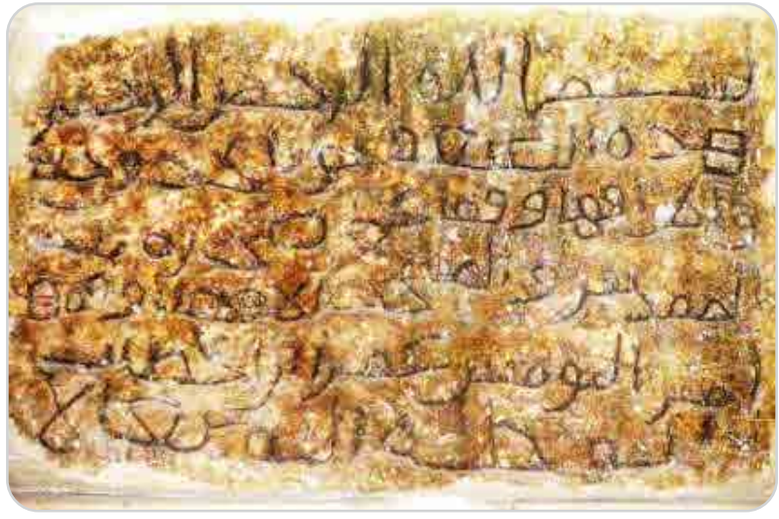
---

(1) Sources regarding this issue:

(1)ʿA. I. Ghabban, “Naqsh Zuhayr: Aqdam Naqsh Islāmī”, Arabia, 2003, Volume I, pp. 293-342.

(2) ʿA. I. Ghabban (Trans. & Remarks by R. G. Hoyland), “The Inscription Of Zuhayr, The Oldest Islamic Inscription (24 AH/AD 644–645), The Rise Of The Arabic Script And The Nature Of The Early Islamic State”, Arabian Archaeology And Epigraphy, 2008, Volume 19, pp. 210-237. H. B. A. H. Al-Kilabi, Al-Nuqūsh Al-Islāmīyah ʿala Ṭarīq al-Ḥajj al-Shāmī bi-Shamāl Gharb al-Mamlakah al-ʿArabīyah al-Saʿūdīyah, 2009, Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭanīyah: Ar-Riyāḍ, 2009, pp. 62-63.

(3) R. Hoyland, “Epigraphy And The Linguistic Background Of The Qur’ān” in G. S. Reynolds (Ed.), The Qur’ān In Its Historical Context, 2008, Routledge Studies in the Qur’an, Routledge: London & New York, p. 62 and p. 68 note 42.



Text of the inscription:

1. In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
2. This land of Nūbā, with its boundaries
3. and its outskirts are endowed upon the Rock
4. of the Holy [Sanctuary] and al-Masjid al-Aqṣā. It was endowed
5. by the Commander of the Believers, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb
6. for the sake of Allah Most High (written as *taʿālā* without the final *alif maqṣūrah*)

The story of the inscription's discovery is told by local historian Nasīm Abū ʿAmūd. In 1947, the village was surprised by the arrival of an unidentified British man (apparently having heard of the stone inscription in the al-ʿUmarī Mosque) who entered the mosque with his shoes on, intending to copy the inscription onto paper for further study. However, he slipped and injured his foot before he could leave, abandoning the papers with a man named Maḥmūd ʿAlī al-Ṭurmān. The man never returned. Had he succeeded in interpreting the inscription, he might have gained recognition for uncovering one of the earliest known Islamic inscriptions to date.

The matter remained dormant until 1990, when the locals decided to renovate the mosque. They contacted Dr. Yūnus ʿAmr, who came accompanied by researcher Najāḥ Abū Sārah from the University of Hebron. Najāḥ Abū Sārah studied the inscription and included it in her master's thesis at the University of Jordan in 1993[1]. Her thesis was reviewed by Dr. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dūrī and others.

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(1) Thesis ID: MD 551068, Year: 1993

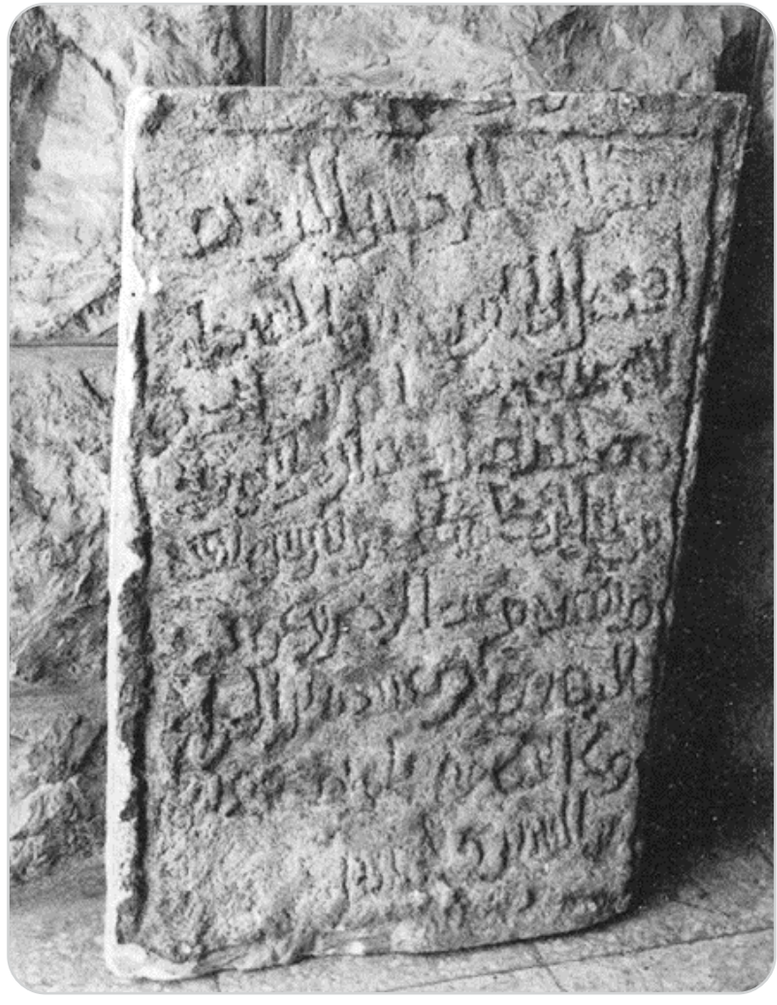
The full text and content of the thesis can be accessed through the following link on the Dār al-Manẓūmah website:

http://search.mandumah.com/Record/551068

The reason this inscription drew such attention is that the endowments made by ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) for al-Masjid al-Aqṣā are well-known from Islamic historical sources, but no physical evidence had been found to confirm them—until this discovery.

According to Najāḥ Abū Sārah's analysis, the inscription was carved into a coarse, light brown sandstone slab measuring 77 × 49 cm. The text spans six uneven lines, with the last line being the most difficult to read due to wear on the stone. She compared it to two other inscriptions: the 55 AH (674 CE) inscription at the shrine of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd in the town of Ḥalḥūl north of Hebron, and the 58 AH (677 CE) inscription at the dam of Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān in Ṭāʾif (to be discussed shortly).

Archaeological Inscription in Jerusalem Mentioning Abū ʿUbaydah and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān – 32 AH



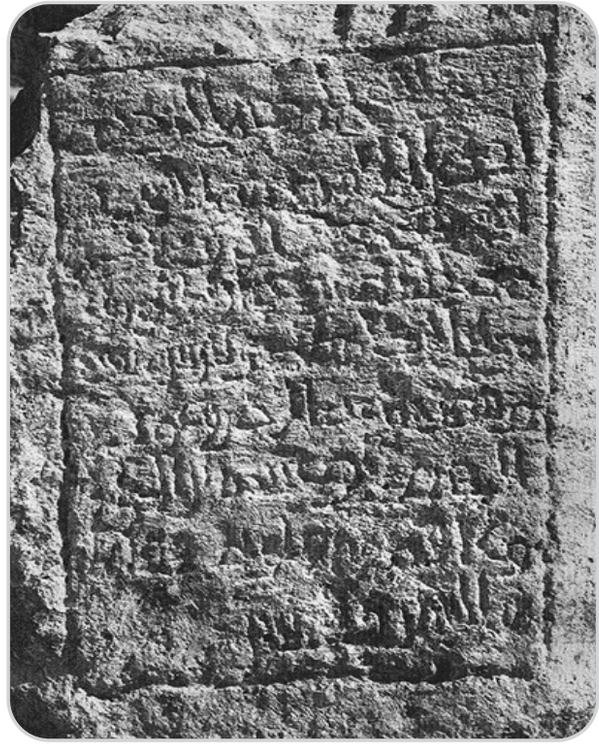
This inscription includes the names of two noble Companions: Abū ʿUbaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ (the conqueror of Jerusalem in 16 AH) and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf (one of the witnesses to the ʿUmarī Covenant, issued when Caliph ʿUmar received the keys to the city and granted safety to its people) — may Allah be pleased with them both.

It appears that the inscription was part of a treaty or agreement, but unfortunately, much of the text is unclear. The scribe of the inscription is named Muʿāwiyah. It is uncertain whether this refers to the Companion Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān (may Allah be pleased with him)—who was known to be literate, was a witness to the ʿUmarī Covenant, and governed al-Shām at the time—or someone else with the same name.

The inscription was discovered in 1968 in the southwestern corner of the al-Ḥaram (the Noble Sanctuary) by a team from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem during excavations led by Professor Benjamin Mazar. Although the original stone was damaged due to negligence by the excavation team, a replica had thankfully been made prior to the damage[1].

Photograph of the inscription (80 × 50 cm):

The inscription shows no issue with separating letters of a word across lines, as seen with the word *dhimmah* (protection/guarantee).



1. In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
2. ..... (unclear)
3. ..... (unclear) *dh*
4. *-mmah* of Allah and the protection of His Messenger
5. ..... (unclear)
6. Witnessed by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf
7. al-Zuhrī and Abū ʿUbaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ
8. Written by Muʿāwiyah ..... (unclear)
9. In the year thirty-two

(1) M. Sharon, “Witnessed By Three Disciples Of The Prophet: The Jerusalem 32 Inscription From 32 AH / 652 CE”, Israel Exploration Journal, 2018, Volume 68, No. 1, pp. 100-111

Archaeological Inscription Regarding the Assassination of ʿUthmān – 36 AH

This inscription[1] records the reaction of its author to the assassination of the Rightly Guided Caliph ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān (may Allah be pleased with him) in 35–36 AH = 656 CE.

1. I am Qays A... (unclear)
2. Written by Abū... (unclear)
3. Kathīr curses
4. those who
5. killed ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān
6. and those who approved of his killing
7. [they] killed and [were] killed

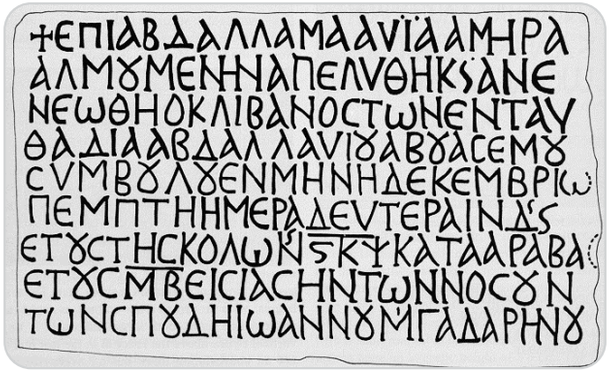
Archaeological Inscriptions from the Era of Muʿāwiyah – Greek Inscription, 42 AH

The first of these is a Greek stone inscription discovered in the region of Ghadīr al-Ḥammah, located in the Golan Heights (Syria), an area known for its natural springs with both hot and cold waters. The inscription celebrates the restoration and reopening of a Byzantine-style therapeutic bathhouse connected to these springs during the caliphate of Muʿāwiyah (may Allah be pleased with him). The inscription's commissioner was a Christian, as indicated by the cross engraved at the beginning (on the left).

Unusually for that period, the inscription includes the exact day, month, and year of the reopening event, along with the corresponding Hijrī date: 42 AH = 662–663 CE[2]. The average letter size is approximately 3 cm.

(1) F. Imbert, "Califes, Princes et Poètes Dans Les Graffiti du Début de l'Islam", Romano-Arabica, 2015, Volume 15, pp. 65-66 and p. 75 (Fig. 3)

(2) After the assassination of the Commander of the Believers ʿAlī (may Allah be pleased with him), his son al-Ḥasan—the grandson of the Prophet—relinquished leadership to Muʿāwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them both) in 41 AH, in order to prevent bloodshed among Muslims and extinguish the strife of that time.



Graphic rendering of the inscription's content[1]**:**

1. (Cross symbol)... In the days of ʿAbd Allāh Muʿāwiyah, Commander
2. of the Believers... the thermal baths for the
3. people were saved and rebuilt
4. by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abū Hāshim (written *Abū*, not *Abī*), the
5. governor... this was on the fifth of December
6. on the second day (of the week), in the sixth year of the indiction cycle[2]
7. In the official year 726, corresponding to the Arabs to the year 42
8. for the healing of the sick... under the oversight of Iōannēs
9. The official of Gadara

Engraved Seal from the Era of Muʿāwiyah – 44 AH

The first image of the seal[3] is made of lead, with a diameter of 3.5 cm, a thickness of 3 mm, and a weight of 21.53 grams:

1. Among what was ordered by
2. The Commander of the Believers
3. Muʿāwiyah: the dismissal of the
4. governor ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀ
5. from the governorship in
6. al-Baṣrah

(1) Y. Hirschfeld & G. Solar, "The Roman Thermae At Hammat Gader: Preliminary Report Of Three Seasons Of Excavations", Israel Exploration Journal, 1981, Volume 31, pp. 203-205

(2) The indiction refers to a 15-year fiscal cycle used in the administrative system of the later Roman (Byzantine) Empire.

(3) Classical Rarities Of Islamic Coinage, Wednesday 25 April 2012, 2012, Baldwin's Islamic Coin Auction - 19, A. H. Baldwin & Sons Ltd: London (UK), Lot 5

The second image of the seal[1] is made of cuprite (a copper oxide), with a diameter of 3.4 cm and a weight of 25.20 grams.

I returned to the historical sources and found confirmation of this event. In *al-Muntaẓam fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk wa-l-Umam* by Ibn al-Jawzī, under the events of the year 44 AH, it states:

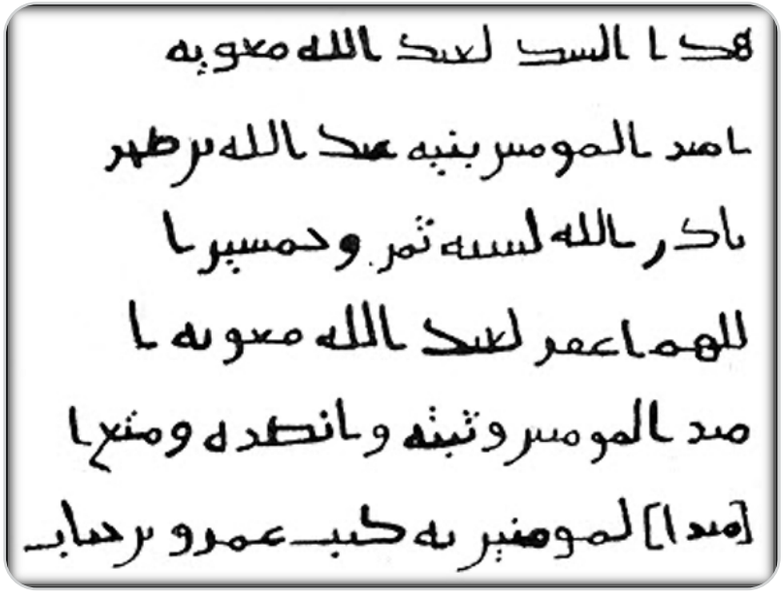
“Then came the year forty-four.” Among the events he mentions:

“In that year, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir was removed from his position in al-Baṣrah... The reason for his dismissal was that Ibn ʿĀmir was lenient and did not restrain the foolish nor punish them, and thus al-Baṣrah fell into disorder. Then Ibn al-Kawwāʾ—whose name was ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Awfā—came to Muʿāwiyah and informed him of the situation. He said: ‘As for al-Baṣrah, its foolish have taken control, and its governor is weak.’ So Muʿāwiyah dismissed him and appointed al-Ḥārith ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Azdī.”

Inscription of the Dam of Muʿāwiyah in Ṭāʾif – 58 AH

This inscription documents one of the notable public works carried out during the caliphate of the Commander of the Believers, Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān (may Allah be pleased with him) in the year 58 AH = 678 CE.

(1) Ancient & World Coin Signature Auction - New York (Heritage Auctions), 2013 January 6-7



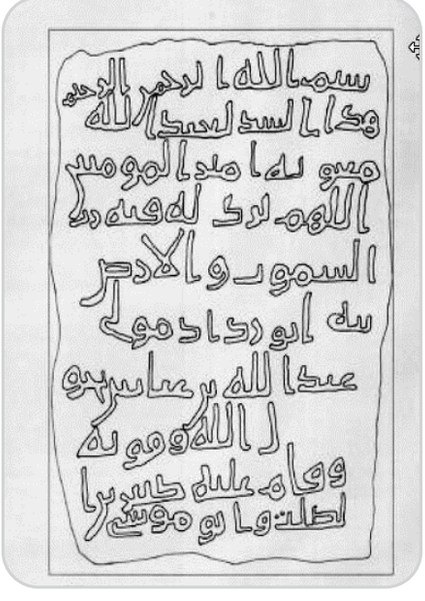
Graphic rendering of the inscription's content[1]**:**

1. This dam belongs to ʿAbd Allāh Muʿāwiyah
2. , the Commander of the Believers. It was built by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṣakhr
3. by the permission of Allah in the year fifty-eight
4. O Allah, forgive ʿAbd Allāh Muʿāwiyah, the
5. Commander of the Believers, support and strengthen him, and bless
6. the believers through him. It was written by ʿAmr ibn Ḥabbāb.

(1) G. C. Miles, "Early Islamic Inscriptions Near Ṭa'if In The Ḥijaz", 1948, Journal Of Near Eastern Studies, Volume VII, pp. 236-242

Dam of Wādī al-Khanq, East of al-Madīnah

This is the inscription found on the foundation stone of the dam at Wādī al-Khanq, located east of al-Madīnah (along the Mecca–Madīnah route), during the caliphate of Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān (may Allah be pleased with him). The inscription includes the names of three Companions.



Text of the inscription:

1. In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
2. This dam belongs to ʿAbd Allāh
3. Muʿāwiyah, Commander of the Believers
4. O Allah, bless it for him, Lord of
5. the heavens and the earth
6. It was built by Abū Raddād, the servant (*mawlā*) of
7. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās, with the permission
8. and the power of Allah
9. Supervised by Kathīr ibn al-
10. Ṣalt and Abū Mūsā

Dr. Saʿd al-Rāshid was the first to study and document the Dam of Muʿāwiyah in detail. His research was published in the book *Dirāsāt fī al-Āthār al-Islāmiyyah al-Mubakkirah bi-l-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*, 1421 AH edition. He recorded the dam's measurements—including the collapsed middle section visible in photographs—as 56 meters in length, 14 meters in width, and 17 meters in height.

The inscribed foundation stone was originally located on the wall of the main dam. Fortunately, Dr. Saʿd al-Rāshid managed to photograph and study it before an attempted theft led to its removal. A team led by Dr. John Rowell successfully transferred the inscription to the expedition's base in ʿĀqūl, after which it was deposited in the National Museum[1].

Egyptian Papyrus Mentioning ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ – 43 AH

This papyrus, written in Coptic and dated to 43 AH = 664 CE[2], provides historical confirmation of events following the Muslim conquest of Egypt. After ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ (may Allah be pleased with him) entered Egypt, he chose not to replace the local village chiefs with Muslims. Instead, he maintained their leadership roles on the condition that they submit accurate records of the working-age male population in each village—those capable of labor, trade, or military service.

(1) Another valuable book on early Islamic inscriptions and archaeological traces is by Dr. Saʿd ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Rāshid, titled *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah min Makkah al-Mukarramah: Dirāsah wa-Taḥqīq* (Islamic Inscriptions from Makkah al-Mukarramah: Study and Verification), published by the King Fahd National Library, Riyadh, 1416 AH / 1995 CE.

(2) W. E. Crum, Catalogue Of The Coptic Manuscripts In The British Museum, 1905, British Museum: London (UK), pp. 453-454, Plate II.

This papyrus contains one such report from a village chief named Philotheos, who, together with another village chief and a priest, pledged not to withhold any man aged 14 or older from being included in the census.

+ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ϥⲓⲗⲟⲑⲉ ⲡⲁⲡⲉ ⲡⲩⲉ ⲙⲡⲓⲁⲕⲁⲣⲓⲟⲥ ϩⲟⲧⲣⲓ ⲡϣⲟⲓⲧϧⲏⲗⲁ | 2 ⲉⲓϣⲟⲣⲕ ⲙⲡⲛⲟⲧⲧⲉ ⲡⲁⲛⲧⲟⲕⲣⲁ-ⲧⲱⲣ ⲙⲡⲉⲧϧⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲓⲃⲣⲟⲥ ϧⲏⲙⲓⲕⲁ | 3 -ϣⲟⲙⲉ ⲉⲡⲁϩⲟⲩ ϩⲙⲡⲓⲧⲙⲉ ⲧⲏⲣⲃ ϧⲏⲉⲙⲡⲓⲧⲁⲃⲧⲉ ⲡⲣⲟⲩ-ⲡⲉ | 4 ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲙⲡⲓⲧⲁⲥⲥⲉ ⲙⲛⲟⲩ ⲙⲧⲉⲧⲛⲉⲙⲡⲓⲧ-ϧⲟⲉⲓⲥ + ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲓⲟⲩⲥⲧⲟⲥ | 5 ⲡⲥⲁϩ ⲙⲧⲙⲉ² ⲉⲓϣⲟⲣⲕ ⲙⲡⲛⲟⲧⲧⲉ ⲡⲁⲛⲧⲟⲕⲣⲁⲧⲱⲣ ⲙⲡⲉⲧϧⲁⲓ | 6 ⲛⲁⲓ-ⲃⲣⲟⲥ ϧⲏⲙⲓⲕⲁϣⲟⲙⲉ (*above* ⲉⲡⲁϩⲟⲩ) ϩⲙⲡⲓⲧⲙⲉ ⲧⲏⲣⲃ ⲉⲙⲡⲓⲧⲁⲥⲥⲉ | 7 ⲙⲛⲟⲩ ⲙⲧⲉⲧⲛⲉⲙⲡⲓⲧϧⲟ-ⲉⲓⲥ +. Then, in the hand of the above lists: + *ανακεφαλ*ε *τ*ω *συντελλ κωμ σενιλαεως εις νβγ*.

+ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ϥⲓⲗⲟⲑⲉⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲓⲥⲁⲓⲁⲥ ⲛⲁⲡⲓⲧⲉ ⲙⲡⲁ-ⲡⲁⲧⲏⲣ ⲡⲉⲡⲣⲉ/ | 2 ⲡϣⲟⲙⲡⲧⲙⲉ ⲧϧⲙⲉⲗⲁ ⲉⲙⲉϩⲁⲓ ⲉⲓϣⲟⲣⲕ ⲙⲡⲣⲁⲛ ⲙⲡⲛⲟⲧⲧⲉ | 3 ⲙⲡⲉⲧϧⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲓ-ⲃⲣⲟⲥ ϧⲏⲙⲓⲕⲁⲗⲁⲁⲧ ⲡϣⲟⲙⲉ ⲉⲡⲁϩⲟⲩ ϩⲙⲡⲓⲧⲙⲉ | 4 ϧⲏⲉⲙⲡⲓⲧⲁⲃⲧⲉ ⲡϣⲟⲙⲡⲉ ⲉⲡⲉⲥⲉⲏⲧ ⲉⲕⲩⲁⲙⲉⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲥⲟⲟⲩ ϧⲉⲁⲛⲕⲟ | 5 ⲧⲓⲧⲁⲁⲩ ⲛϩⲟⲧⲏ ⲙⲡⲉⲛⲓⲏ + *συμι/* (triple cross) *φιλοθι πρωτοκι στοιχι συμι/* (triple cross) *ησαιας στοιχι*

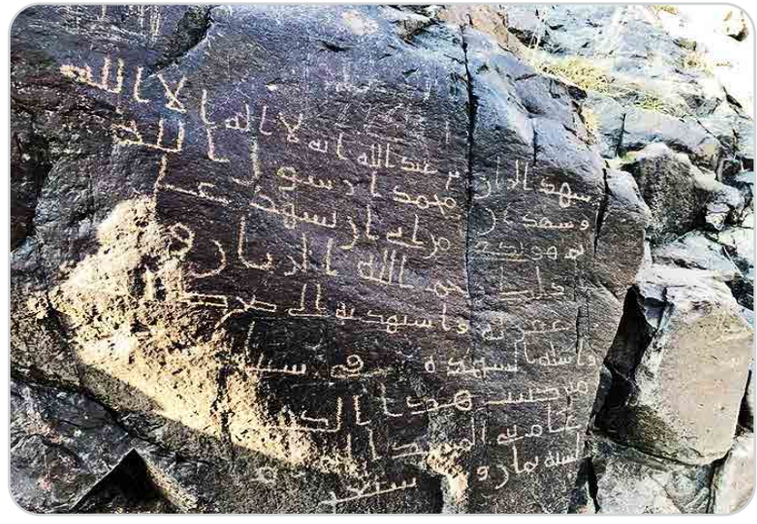
+ ⲁⲡⲁⲧⲏⲣ ⲉⲗⲁϫ/ ⲡⲣⲉ/ ⲧⲓⲥⲧⲟⲓϫ

Graphic rendering of the papyrus content with line numbers and text:

The papyrus is composed of two sections. The first is the pledge from Philotheos, and the second is a repetition of the same pledge, this time from another village chief named Esaias and the priest Apater[1].

Although this papyrus differs from the stone inscriptions presented in this chapter, it was included here due to its clear historical value—demonstrating the presence of the Companions in Egypt exactly as recorded in the Islamic books of *ḥadīth*, *sīrah,* and history.

Inscription Commemorating the Events Involving al-Ḥajjāj and ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr – 78 AH



This inscription[2] documents the conclusion of a critical historical episode—when al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqafī rebuilt al-Masjid al-Ḥarām in 78 AH = 697 CE, following his killing of ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him). The inscription reads:

1. Al-Rayyān ibn ʿAbd Allāh testified that there is no deity but Allah
2. and testified that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah
3. Then he bleeds (unclear) those who come to testify to
4. that. May Allah have mercy on al-Rayyān and
5. Forgive him and guide him to the path of Paradise

(1) For mor information about this: L. S. B. MacCoull, “BM 1079, CPR IX 44 And The Chrysargon”, Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik, 1994, Volume 100, pp. 141-142. And: R. Hoyland, “New Documentary Texts And The Early Islamic State”, Bulletin Of The School Of Oriental And African Studies, 2006, Volume 69,

(2) See the research of Prof. Dr. Nāṣir ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥārithī in the journal ʿĀlam al-Makhṭūṭāt wa-l-Nawādir, Issue 1, Volume 4 (Muḥarram – Jumādā al-Ākhirah 1420 AH / May – October 1999 CE).

6. And I ask Him for martyrdom in His cause.
7. Who wrote this inscription
8. In the year the Sacred Mosque was rebuilt
9. in the year seventy-eight

It is well known that Allah guided Ibrāhīm to the foundations of the Kaʿbah, and he raised them with his son Ismāʿīl, as mentioned in the Qur'ān: **"And [mention] when Ibrāhīm was raising the foundations of the House, and [with him] Ismāʿīl, [saying], 'Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed, You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.'"** *(Sūrat al-Baqarah: 127)*

The stones of the Kaʿbah itself (aside from the Black Stone) are not sacred in and of themselves. The structure has been rebuilt and repaired multiple times throughout history, including before the revelation to the Prophet ﷺ. At that time, fearing flood damage, the Quraysh decided to rebuild it, on the condition that only lawful wealth be used, excluding any earnings from prostitution, usury, or injustice. They rebuilt it, and the Prophet ﷺ himself placed the Black Stone in its position. However, their lawful funds were insufficient to complete the entire structure, so they left out the area known as Ḥijr Ismāʿīl (al-Ḥaṭīm), marking it as part of the original House (the semicircular wall adjacent to the Kaʿbah today).

The Prophet ﷺ wished to one day rebuild the Kaʿbah, including the Ḥijr, and add two doors to it[1], but he refrained out of concern for the newly converted Arabs, who might find such a change too unsettling.

Later, when ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) declared the caliphate in Makkah in opposition to the hereditary succession of Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiyah, he consulted with some of the younger Companions and Tābiʿūn about fulfilling the Prophet's wish—especially since the Kaʿbah had suffered damage during the siege led by Ḥuṣayn ibn Numayr al-Sukūnī from Yazīd's army. They agreed with him, so in 64 AH, he demolished the Kaʿbah, rebuilt it, including Ḥijr Ismāʿīl, and gave it two doors.

However, during the intensified conflict under ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān's rule, al-Ḥajjāj emerged victorious in 73 AH, killing Ibn al-Zubayr and demolishing the Kaʿbah again to restore it to its former shape. It is said that he did so out of ignorance of the Prophet's hadith regarding

(1) Al-Bukhārī and Muslim both narrated in their Ṣaḥīḥs that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to ʿĀ'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her):

«Did you not see that your people were short of funds? Had it not been for the fact that your people have recently left disbelief, I would have demolished the Kaʿbah, and made for it an eastern door and a western door, and included the Ḥijr within it.»

Ḥijr Ismāʿīl, and when he later learned of it, he said, “I wish we had left it and what he had done with it.[1]”

Later, al-Mahdī ibn al-Manṣūr of the ʿAbbāsids consulted Imām Mālik about rebuilding the Kaʿbah, but Mālik discouraged him, fearing that the sanctity of the Kaʿbah would be diminished in the eyes of the people if it were continually rebuilt. The last reconstruction of the Kaʿbah took place in 1040 AH by order of Muḥammad ʿAlī Bāshā, the ruler of Egypt.

With this, I conclude this section on inscriptions and archaeological documentation. I have deliberately excluded a large number of inscriptions left by unknown individuals—even those that included the Prophet’s name in the *shahādah*—as well as inscriptions by people whose grandfather (the third name) was a well-known Companion. Many such examples can be found in the book mentioned at the beginning of this chapter: *al-Nuqūsh al-ʿArabiyyah al-Mubakkirah bi-Manṭiqat al-Ṭāʾif* (1994) by Dr. Nāṣir ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥārithī, Assistant Professor of Archaeology and Islamic Arts at Umm al-Qurā University.

That book is rich with inscriptions and relics from the 2nd century AH (i.e., between 100 and 200 AH) and is the second volume in a three-part series forming Dr. al-Ḥārithī’s *Encyclopedia of Islamic Antiquities in the Ṭāʾif Province*.

We now move on to the second part of our journey: an entire chapter dedicated to the documents, writings, and letters of the Prophet ﷺ to kings and others. The first fifty years of Islam were filled with communications, treaties, invitations, and political orders exchanged among Muslims themselves and between them and the surrounding nations.

(1) See al-Bidāyah wa-l-Nihāyah by Ibn Kathīr, under the events of the year 64 AH, where he discusses the demolition and reconstruction of the Kaʿbah during the time of Ibn al-Zubayr.

Important Information Before We Begin

These are essential concepts that the reader should be familiar with in order to better understand the upcoming chapters. Among them:

The Meaning of *Tawātur*

Tawātur in Arabic refers to succession or continuous sequence, as in the verse: **"Then We sent Our messengers in succession."** *(Sūrat al-Muʾminūn: 44)*

In Islamic sciences, especially in the study of *ḥadīth*, *tawātur* refers to a report that is transmitted by such a large number of people—across various generations—who all report the same event or detail, without prior agreement or collaboration. The number is so large, and their accounts so consistent, that it becomes logically impossible for them to have all fabricated the same report identically. This removes the possibility of error, fabrication, or personal bias—especially when many of these narrators never met each other.

Tawātur can be:

- **Verbal** *(lafẓī)*: where the exact same wording is passed down[1].
- **Meaning-based** *(maʿnawī)*: where the message or event is transmitted in different wordings but with the same meaning.

The emphasis on seeing or hearing the reported event firsthand is important to distinguish authentic collective reports from personal beliefs or theological claims affected by bias or

(1) Mutawātir ḥadīths are considered among the highest levels of authenticity in Islamic tradition. Perhaps the most famous example is the ḥadīth: "Whoever deliberately lies about me, let him take his seat in the Fire." This is a mutawātir ḥadīth in wording (lafẓī), narrated by approximately 72 Companions of the Prophet, and then transmitted by a massive number of Tābiʿīn and subsequent generations. It is recorded in Musnad Aḥmad, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sunan Abī Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and others.

distortion—such as the Christian doctrine of the Trinity or calling Jesus "the son of God," which lacks this kind of verifiable mass transmission.

If someone named Saʿīd tells you about a country he visited called China, describing its features in detail, and then a second person, Ayman, whom Saʿīd has never met, comes to you with the same detailed description, followed by a third, a fourth, a fifth, and so on—eventually you will be certain that such a country exists with those specific features. This is despite never having seen it yourself, because you know the reporters could not have conspired, especially when they don't even know each other. It becomes logically impossible that they all fabricated the same report independently.

This kind of reasoning can be applied to many things, including in Islam. The Qurʾān, for example, has been transmitted through *tawātur* across generations by millions of Muslims, heard and recited word-for-word with the seven authentic modes of recitation (*qirāʾāt*), along with the detailed practices of the five daily prayers, the rites of ʿUmrah and Ḥajj, and countless historical events witnessed by multitudes. How then could Islam not lead all religions in the strength of its transmitted reports—especially when Muslim scholars further demanded that each transmission line (*isnād*) be connected, verified, and composed of narrators known for their honesty and strong memory?

Suppose a well-known man named Ibrāhīm performed Ḥajj this year. Many people saw him, and each of them told others, and those others told more, and so on. Muslim scholars would document each *path* of that report, which is called a *sanad*. For example, if a man named Kamāl saw Ibrāhīm at Ḥajj, and he told ʿĀdil, who then told Sharīf, the sanad would be written like this: "From Sharīf, from ʿĀdil, from Kamāl, who said he saw Ibrāhīm at Ḥajj."

Now imagine there are one hundred different chains like this, all consistent in detail, and none of the narrators have met each other, many even coming from different countries. Could there be any doubt that Ibrāhīm performed Ḥajj that year?

Muslim scholars, in fact, go further—insisting that all narrators in a chain must be connected, trustworthy, and known for their truthfulness and strong memory.

That is why any fair-minded historian who understands this method wishes that humanity had adopted the Muslims' system for recording history—at the very least, by citing the names of transmitters and the chains of narration for each report[1]. Unfortunately, most historical accounts lack this level of precision, so we are often left relying only on major events and famous figures, whose stories became widely known through general repetition (*tawātur*).

(1) For further reading, see our publication issued by Markaz Dalāʾil in 1439 AH / 2018 CE, titled Dalālat al-ʿAql ʿalā Thubūt al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah by Muḥammad ibn Khalīfah al-Rabbāḥ.

The Impossibility of Fabricating *All* Islamic Reports and Chains of Transmission

In one of the most extreme expressions of blind hostility found among certain Orientalists, some go as far as denying the historical existence of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ himself. Others take this even further, denying the existence of Makkah altogether and dismissing its well-established history before and during Islam. Despite knowing full well that such claims can only deceive the uninformed—especially laypeople or non-specialist Westerners—and despite being aware that thousands of classical and modern historical sources written by recognized historians and scholars contradict their claims, they try to ease the burden of their own falsehood by openly declaring that they will *not rely* on Muslim sources at all (since, of course, those sources are filled with detailed accounts of Makkah and the Prophet). They attempt to pass this off as "skepticism of Islamic heritage," accusing Muslims of having fabricated and forged the chains of transmission in their historical writings.

But the question remains: Is it really possible to forge all of the Islamic reports and their chains of narration—found in the Prophet's traditions and the biographies of his Companions? Is there any researcher who could sincerely examine them and come away convinced that *all* of it could be fabricated?

The answer is: No.

Yes, error is possible—and this was fully acknowledged and analyzed by Muslim scholars themselves. Yes, there were many documented attempts to fabricate reports about the Prophet and his Companions—and again, Muslim scholars painstakingly exposed them.

But reason and evidence both confirm the impossibility of forging *all* of Islam's reports and *isnāds*.

Take, for example, the famous Lebanese Christian historian Asad Gabriel Rustum (d. 1965), who authored a book titled *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Tārīkh* ("Terminology of History")—modeled after the Muslim science of *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth* (Hadith Terminology). His faith did not prevent him from recognizing the scholarly integrity of Islamic *ḥadīth* sciences and the objectivity of their method. In fact, he hoped—and even called—for the adoption of the same method in the field of historical research. He wrote:

"*Ḥadīth* is based on investigation and narration... History is also based on investigation and narration... So, just as the scholars of ḥadīth developed a discipline for authenticating reports, we too should have a methodology for history.[1]"

(1) From the introduction of his book Muṣṭalaḥ al-Tārīkh, which appears before the table of contents. The first edition of the book was published in 1939, and a more recent edition can be found from Markaz al-Turāth li-l-Buḥūth wa-l-Dirāsāt (Heritage Center for Research and Studies), Egypt, 2014.

To further support Asad Rustum's position, we turn to one of the most respected fair-minded Western scholars in the field of Islamic studies: the German professor Harald Motzki. In 1991, he published a study titled: "The Muṣannaf of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī as a Source of Authentic Aḥādīth of the First Century A.H.[1]"

As is well-known among scholars of *ḥadīth*, *al-Muṣannaf* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq is among the earliest compilations of prophetic traditions and statements of the Companions, systematically arranged according to legal topics. These narrations were transmitted throughout the 1st century AH, from the Prophet ﷺ to his Companions, then to the Tābiʿūn, until they were first formally collected by figures such as al-Zuhrī at the beginning of the second Islamic century.

Motzki's study directly refutes the claims made by hostile Orientalists such as Joseph Schacht and Ignaz Goldziher, who falsely claimed that Muslims invented the *isnāds* (chains of narration) in the second century AH.

Motzki's method centered on analyzing the vast number of chains of narration and their transmitters. His conclusion? It is logically and historically impossible that all these thousands of *isnāds*—stretching across a full century, over vast and separate geographic regions, involving thousands of narrators from different lands—could have been fabricated, coordinated, or invented without contradiction. These chains remained intact, connected, consistent, and detailed across time and space.

This matter is not difficult for anyone who sincerely and objectively seeks the truth. For example, Harald Motzki examined multiple narrations of the same *ḥadīth* not only from collections of *ḥadīth* but also from works of history and *ṭabaqāt* (biographical literature that documents the lives and details of narrators). Through this comparative analysis, he demonstrated the remarkable consistency and harmony among these sources—something that would be impossible if they were all fabricated or forged.

He further clarified that even the minor variations in the wording of a single narration are not due to dishonesty, but rather stem from individuals narrating what they understood, each according to their memory and accuracy—exactly as scholars of *ḥadīth* have long categorized narrators[2].

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(1) Harald Motzki, The University of Chicago Press, Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Jan., 1991), pp. 1-21

(2) One of the most well-known differences between the Qur'ān and the ḥadīths of the Prophet ﷺ is that the Qur'ān is recited as an act of worship by Muslims in their prayers; it is preserved word-for-word, and its wording is not to be altered in any way. In contrast, the ḥadīths of the Prophet may be transmitted and cited by meaning, as long as the intended message is preserved. This is why we often find the same ḥadīth reported in slightly different wordings that carry either the same meaning or meanings that are closely related and complementary.

In this way, we see that even some Orientalists and Western researchers have acknowledged the authenticity and superiority of the Islamic science of *isnād*—a level of rigor in verifying reports and statements that has no equal in historical documentation.

Bernard Lewis, in his 1993 book *Islam in History*, wrote: "Even the most advanced and sophisticated historical methods of the Christian Greek world still fall short of the historical literature of Islam in its total diversity, volume, and depth of analysis.[1]"

James Robson, in his work on *isnād*, made a critical and logical observation that further undermines the claim of fabrication. He pointed out that the amount of *ḥadīths* reported from senior Companions is significantly less than what is narrated from junior Companions. This reality actually supports the credibility of the *ḥadīth* scholars' work, contrary to what some Orientalists claim. For if the *isnāds* were forged, one would expect narrators to attribute most of the sayings to the senior and most well-known Companions, to gain maximum credibility among Muslims[2].

From this, we understand why even one of the most hostile Orientalists toward Islam, Margoliouth, admitted: "The value of the *isnād* system in ensuring accuracy cannot be doubted, and Muslims are justified in being proud of their *ḥadīth* science.[3]"

All these important facts must be kept in mind by any fair-minded reader as they examine the documents, writings, and letters of the Prophet ﷺ to kings and others. These reports are found across dozens of Islamic sources, transmitted through *isnāds* reaching from Madīnah and Makkah to Shām, Iraq, and Yemen. In many cases, the same letter is not only narrated with its full content but also described in detail—its line count, the placement of the Prophet's seal, and more—making it virtually impossible to forge or fabricate, as we have just seen.

(1) Bernard Lewis, Islam In History, 1993, Open Court Publishing, pp.104-105

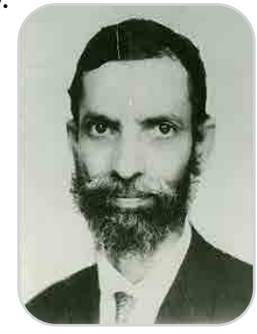
(2) James Robson, The Isnad in Muslim Tradition, p. 26

(3) Margoliouth D. S. Lectures on arabic historians, 1930, p. 20

Chapter Two:
The Letters and Treaties of the Prophet and the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was born in 571 CE in Makkah, in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula. He lived among his people for forty years, known to them for his honesty, trustworthiness, and noble character. At the age of forty, revelation descended upon him, and he called his people to the message for thirteen years. During that time, he faced persecution and harm at the hands of the elite of Quraysh. Most of those who believed in him were from among the poor, the vulnerable, and a few notable figures from Quraysh.

He advised those who could to migrate to Abyssinia (al-Ḥabashah), for in it was a just Christian king who would protect them. This king was *Armah al-Najāshī* (Armah the Negus)[1]. Indeed, a group of Muslims emigrated under the leadership of Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allah be pleased with him). When Quraysh sent envoys to negotiate with the Negus about them, the Prophet ﷺ sent a letter with ʿAmr ibn Umayyah al-Ḍamrī—which we will present shortly.



This letter, along with many others mentioned in the books of *sīrah*, *ḥadīth*, *sunnah*, and history, became the subject of the doctoral thesis of the renowned Indian scholar Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh. He was one of the few modern scholars whose contributions left a lasting impact. Born in 1908 in Ḥaydarābād, India, he worked on translating a large collection of documents

(1) Al-Najāshī was the title given to the king of Abyssinia, just as Qayṣar was for the emperor of Rome, Muqawqis for the ruler of Egypt, Kisrá for the emperor of Persia, and Khāqān for the ruler of the Turks.

from the Prophet's time into French. Upon completing this work, he earned his PhD from the University of the Sorbonne in Paris[1].

He expanded his research by compiling and verifying various sources of these documents, comparing different versions, and analyzing them. His work was first published in French in 1935 and later in Arabic in Cairo in 1941. Since then, the book has received wide acclaim and appreciation for the depth of research and effort put into it. With each new edition, Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh continued to enrich the work by adding newly discovered documents and insights[2].

His book is divided into four main sections:

1. Documents from the Prophet's time in Makkah
2. Documents from the Prophet's time in Madīnah (Yathrib)
3. Documents from the era of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs—Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAlī (may Allah be pleased with them all)
4. An appendix listing letters and treaties attributed to the Prophet that are not authentic.

On page 29 of his work, he discusses the varying degrees of strength and reliability among the Islamic sources used.

It is worth mentioning that Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh came from a distinguished family of scholarship and Islamic jurisprudence. His elder brother, Ḥabīb Allāh, became well-known for his Urdu translation of *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* by al-Balādhurī. His elder sister, Amat al-ʿAzīz, was also recognized for translating *Sharḥ al-Nawawī ʿalā Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* into Urdu.

Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh was fluent in Arabic, English, French, German, and Turkish, which greatly aided him in his travels and his pursuit of rare manuscripts and historical documents in Islamic centers, research institutions, and libraries across the world. Many of the original letters were passed down within families who took pride in preserving them and sometimes transferred them to official archives or collectors, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, including scholars and artifact enthusiasts.

At each stage, detailed descriptions of the content and appearance of these manuscripts were recorded. This ensured that even if the original document was lost or damaged, the knowledge of its contents and form would survive. In some cases, individuals reproduced the manuscripts by copying them in a manner that closely resembled the original or was based on the written description.

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(1) M. Hamidllah, Documents sur la diplomatie musulmane à l'époque du Prophète et des Khalifes orthodoxes / Muhammad Hamidullah ; préf. de M. Gaudefroy Demombynes ; Paris : G.-P. Maisonneuve, 1935

(2) Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh, Majmūʿat al-Wathāʾiq al-Siyāsiyyah li-l-ʿAhd al-Nabawī wa-l-Khilāfah al-Rāshidah (Collection of Political Documents from the Prophetic Era and the Rightly Guided Caliphate).

A Copy of the Prophet's Letter to al-Najāshī

Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh traced the origin and wording of this letter through dozens of classical Islamic sources, which he listed in detail—assigning each a letter-based abbreviation at the beginning of his book to track their references(1).

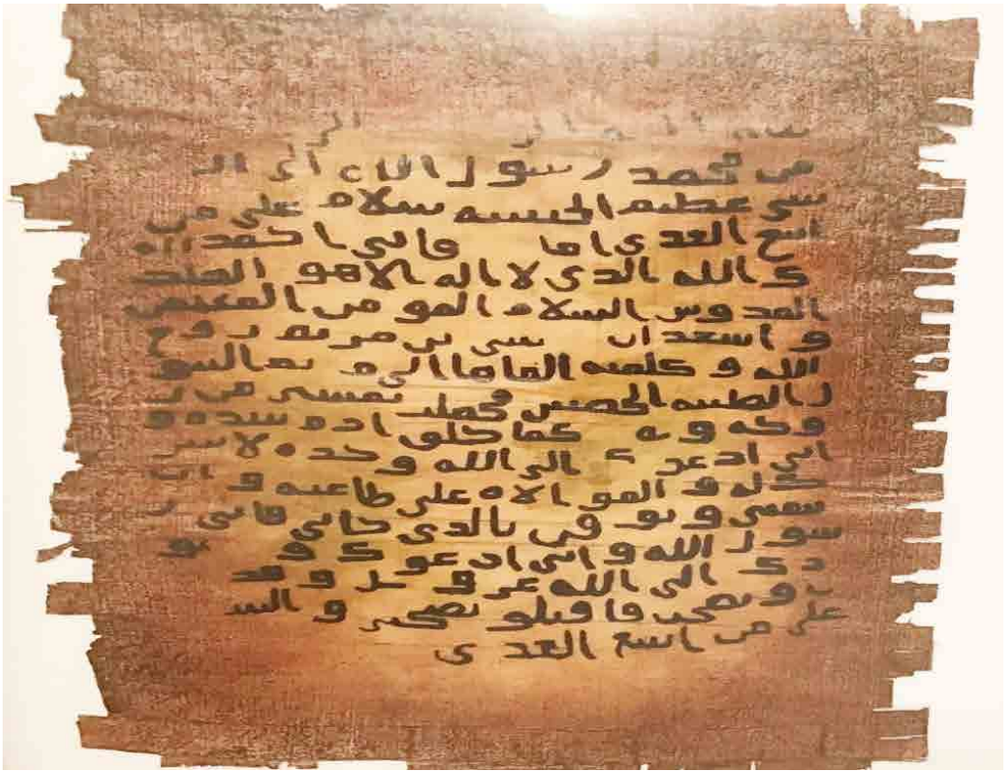
He also presented an image of the manuscript of the Prophet's ﷺ letter, a copy of which was discovered by the Orientalist Dr. M. Dunlop of Brandkirk, Scotland, who published the image in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (JRAS) in January 1940.

Below is the text of the letter as it appears in the image, with the line numbers preserved accordingly. The diacritical marks and vowelization have been added for clarity, as there was no such system in use at the time the original was written:

1. In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
2. From Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah, to the Ne
3. gus, the great ruler of Abyssinia. Peace be upon those who
4. follow guidance. To proceed: I praise you
5. Allah—there is no deity except Him—the Sovereign,
6. the Holy, the Peace, the Faithful, the Protector.
7. I bear witness that ʿĪsā ibn Maryam is the spirit
8. of Allah and His word which He cast into Mary, the
9. chaste, pure, guarded. She conceived ʿĪsā from the
10. spirit and breath of Allah, just as He created Ādam with His own Hand.
11. I call you to Allah alone with no partner,
12. and to align in obedience to Him, and that you
13. follow me and believe in what has come to me, for I am
14. the Messenger of Allah. I call you and you army
15. to Allah, Exalted and Glorious. I have conveyed
16. and advised—so accept my advice. Peace
17. be upon those who follow guidance.

(1) He detailed this in a table on page 36. For example: (BĀ) stands for Ibn Isḥāq's Sīrah, (BṮ) for Usd al-Ghābah by Ibn al-Athīr, (BḤ) for al-Iṣābah by Ibn Ḥajar, (BḤZ) for Jawāmiʿ al-Sīrah by Ibn Ḥazm, (BḤN) for Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, (BD) for Sunan Abī Dāwūd, (BS) for Ṭabaqāt Ibn Saʿd, (BLĀ) for Futūḥ al-Buldān by al-Balādhurī, (BH) for Sīrat Ibn Hishām, (BʿḤ) for Futūḥ Miṣr by Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, (BK) for al-Bidāyah wa-l-Nihāyah by Ibn Kathīr, (ṬB) for Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, and (BQ) for Zād al-Maʿād by Ibn al-Qayyim.

Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh noted that the image of the letter was published with the permission of Dr. Dunlop. The photo appears on page 102 of the sixth edition of his book, published by Dār al-Nafāʾis, Beirut—a volume that spans 757 pages.



An Enhanced Image of the Letter Published by Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh

Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh also transmitted the full texts of the Prophet's letters and the related reports, including the reply of al-Najāshī to the Prophet ﷺ. Both al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrated that the Prophet ﷺ prayed the funeral prayer for al-Najāshī upon his death as a Muslim.

Image of the Prophet's Letter to Heraclius, Emperor of Rome

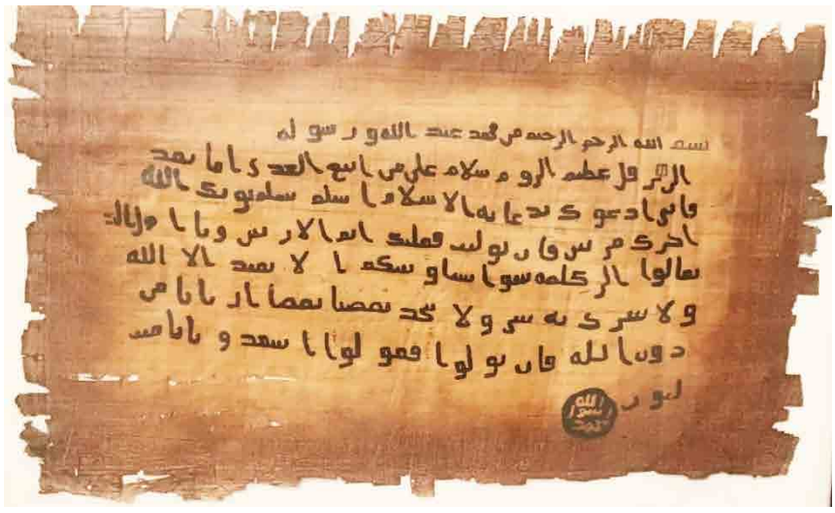
After citing dozens of Islamic sources that transmitted the text and various reports about this letter, Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh referred to his recent discovery of an original image of the letter. It had been in the possession of King ʿAbd Allāh of Jordan, then passed to one of his concubines, who took it to Switzerland and sold it to the ruler of Abu Dhabi. When King Ḥusayn of Jordan learned of this, he invoked his right of preemption, and the Sultan of Abu Dhabi, gracious in his Islamic character, consented[1]. The letter was then preserved in ʿAmman. The content of the manuscript reads as follows:

(1) The right of preemption in Islam grants the original or neighboring owner the priority to acquire a property that has been transferred to a new owner, by paying a compensation equivalent to its value, whether in money or another form of exchange.

1. In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. From Muḥammad, the servant of Allah and His Messenger
2. To Heraclius, the great one of the Romans. Peace be upon those who follow guidance. To proceed:
3. I invite you with the call of Islām: submit [to Allah], and you will be safe. Allah will grant you a double reward.
4. But if you turn away, then upon you is the sin of the *Arians*. O People of the Book!
5. Come to a word that is just between us and you: that we will worship none but Allah,
6. And not associate anything with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords beside Allah.
7. But if they turn away, then say: bear witness that we are Muslims.

When Dihyah al-Kalbī (may Allah be pleased with him) delivered the letter to Heraclius in al-Shām (Greater Syria), Heraclius was already aware of the foretold arrival of a prophet in the end of times. This became evident in his dialogue with Abū Sufyān (prior to Abū Sufyān's conversion to Islam). Thus, the proof was established against him through the Prophet's letter, but he chose to preserve his kingship and rule, fearing the reaction of his people more than he desired to believe in and follow the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The image was published by Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh on page 108 of his book.



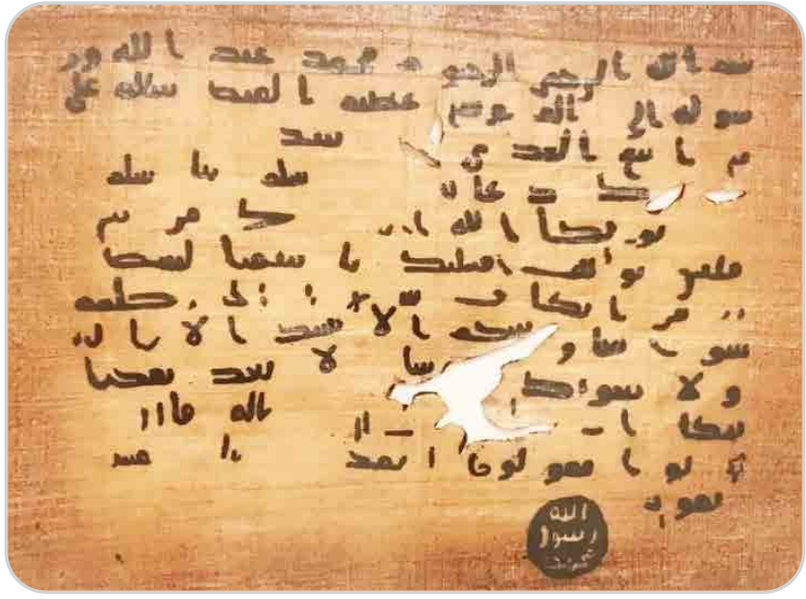
An Enhanced Image of the Version Published by Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh

Image of the Prophet's Letter to al-Muqawqis, Ruler of the Copts

The term *Copts* refers to the native people of Egypt during the Byzantine rule and is not specific to Christians, as is commonly assumed. Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh listed Islamic sources that recorded the texts and reports about this letter, as well as academic journals such as the *Journal Asiatique* in Paris (1854), *al-Hilāl* magazine in Egypt (1904), and *The Islamic Review* in England (1917). He also referenced the image of the letter found in these sources, which had been discovered in a church near Akhmīm in Upper Egypt. Its content reads:

1. In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. From Muḥammad, the servant of Allah and
2. His Messenger, to al-Muqawqis, the great one of the Copts. Peace be upon
3. those who follow guidance. To proceed:
4. I call you with the invitation of Islām: submit [to Allah], and you will be safe.
5. Allah will grant you a double reward.
6. But if you turn away, then upon you is the sin of the Copts.
7. O People of the Book! Come to a word
8. that is just between us and you: that we will worship none but Allah,
9. and not associate anything with Him, and that none of us
10. shall take others as lords beside Allah. But if
11. they turn away, then say: bear witness that we are
12. Muslims.

It is well known from the books of *Sīrah* and *Ṭabaqāt* that al-Muqawqis replied to the Prophet ﷺ, stating that he was aware a prophet was yet to come. He sent back with the Prophet's envoy two maidservants—Māriyah and her sister Sīrīn—along with other gifts, but he withheld his own conversion, preferring to preserve his rule.



An Enhanced Image of the Version Published by Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh on Page 137 of His Book. This letter was sent to al-Muqawqis in Alexandria with Ḥāṭib ibn Abī Baltaʿah (may Allah be pleased with him). Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh noted that it was published with permission from the Director of the Topkapı Museum in Istanbul, Turkey.

We also observe that the letters written during the Prophet's time in Madinah were sealed with his ring, which bore the inscription "Muḥammad" at the bottom, "Messenger" above it, and "Allah" at the top[1]. This was done after the Companions informed him that the kings of non-Arabs would not accept a letter unless it was sealed—an incident recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him). This seal was not present in his earlier letter to al-Najāshī when the Prophet ﷺ was still in Makkah before the Hijrah.

Image of the Prophet's Letter to Kisrā, the Great of Persia

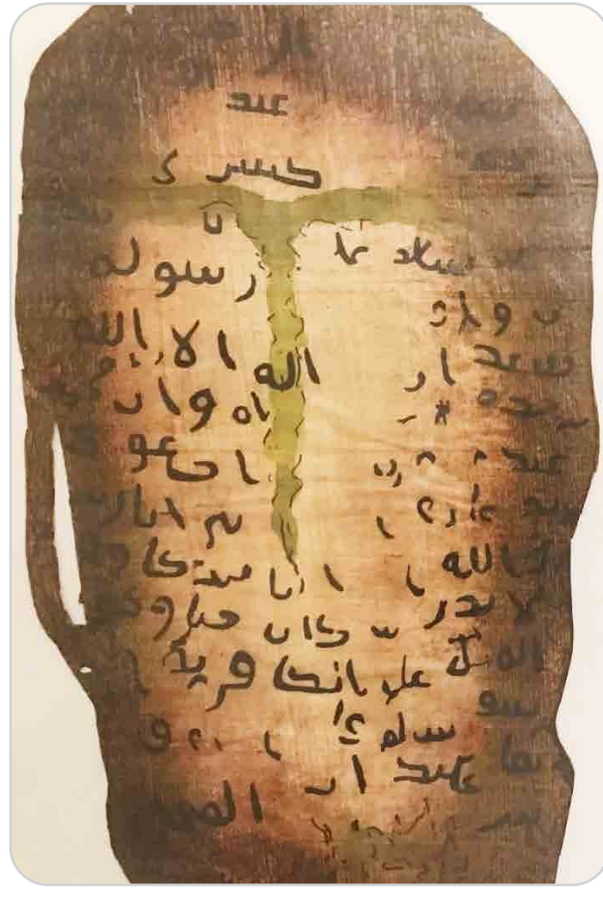
This was addressed to Kisrā Parvīz ibn Hurmuz (or Hurmuzd), and the Prophet sent it with ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ḥudhāfah al-Sahmī (may Allah be pleased with him) to Persia (modern-day Iran). Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh cited various Islamic sources preserving the text and reports of the

(1) Al-Bukhārī narrated in his Ṣaḥīḥ, among others, from Ibn ʿUmar (may Allāh be pleased with him) that the Prophet lost his ring in the well of Ariys. Based on this, any ring attributed to the Prophet found in a museum anywhere in the world is not authentic.

letter, including what Kolesnikov quoted from *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Akhbār al-Furs wa al-ʿArab*. The text of the letter reads:

1. In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy
2. From Muḥammad, the servant of Allah and
3. His Messenger, to Kisrā, the Great of
4. Persia. Peace be upon the one who follows guidance,
5. believes in Allah and His Messenger,
6. and bears witness that there is no [true] deity but Allah
7. alone, without a partner, and that Muḥammad is
8. His servant and Messenger. I invite you
9. With the call of Allah, for indeed I am the Messenger
10. of Allah to all of mankind,
11. to warn whoever is alive, and so that the word
12. may be fulfilled against the disbelievers.
13. Submit, and you will be safe. If you turn away,
14. Then upon you is the sin of the
15. Magians.

The books of *sīrah* report Kisrā's anger and his tearing of the Prophet's letter. He saw the Arabs, from Bahrain to Yemen, as his subjects. When the Prophet heard of his act, he supplicated against him, saying: "May Allah tear apart his dominion." Kisrā was then killed by his own son, and the Persian Empire soon fell during the Islamic conquests.



Enhanced image from the one published by Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh in his book on p. 141, with permission from its owner, Mr. Henri Pheroun.

The Prophet's Letter to al-Mundhir ibn Sāwā al-ʿAbdī

Al-Mundhir ibn Sāwā was Kisrā's governor over Bahrain. Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh referenced Islamic sources that preserved the texts of two letters sent by the Prophet to him. The first was a call to Islam, delivered by al-ʿAlāʾ ibn al-Ḥaḍramī (may Allah be pleased with him). The second letter, which contained directives and instructions, was discovered in Damascus. Ḥamīd Allāh presented a handwritten facsimile from the *Journal of the German Oriental Society (ZDMG)*, vol. 17 (1863), and *The Islamic Review*, January 1917. Its text is as follows:

1. In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy. From Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah, to
2. al-Mundhir ibn Sāwā. Peace be upon you. Verily, I praise Allah
3. to you—there is no [true] deity but He. I bear witness that there is no deity but
4. Allah, and that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger. To proceed: I remind you of
5. Allah Almighty. Whoever gives sincere advice does so for his own soul. Whoever obeys
6. my messengers and follows their command has obeyed me. And whoever advises them has advised me.
7. My messengers have praised you. I have interceded on behalf of
8. your people. Leave the Muslims upon what they embraced. I have pardoned the people
9. of sins. Accept it from them. If you uphold righteousness, you will not be removed from your post. Whoever
10. remains upon Judaism or Magianism must pay the jizyah.

Al-Mundhir ibn Sāwā is distinct from Bādhān, Kisrā's governor over Yemen. When the Prophet's letter reached Kisrā and was torn up, Kisrā commanded Bādhān to investigate and capture the Prophet. But when Bādhān's envoys arrived, the Prophet foretold to them Kisrā's death—a fact that was impossible to know given the distance. When confirmation of Kisrā's death eventually arrived, it led to the conversion of Bādhān and the people of Yemen to Islam.

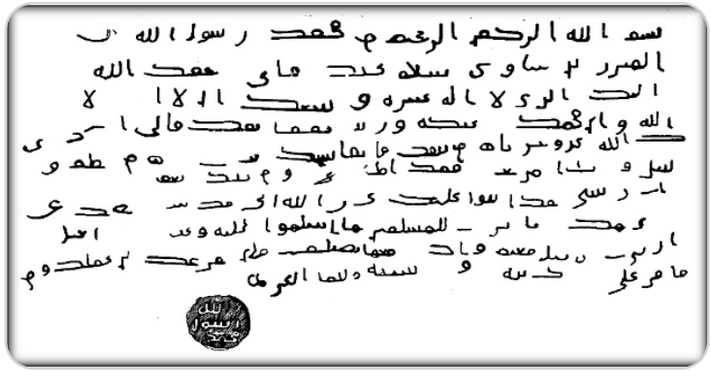


Image of the Handwritten Rendering of the Letter

As published by Muḥammad Ḥamīdullāh on page 147 of his book, where he noted that it was reproduced with permission from the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (ZDMG), the Journal of the German Orientalist Society.

Table of Contents of the Book al-Wathāʾiq al-Siyāsiyyah (The Political Documents)

Here, we suffice with this small portion of a book which, as previously noted, spans 757 pages in its sixth edition. It includes an average of over 370 documents, each one presenting history with multiple chains of narration for a single account, making the possibility of fabrication nearly impossible. These span hundreds of letters, treaties, instructions, and commands from the time of the Prophet to the end of the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

Therefore, we refer any reader seeking further details to the original source. Below is the complete table of contents from *The Political Documents of the Prophetic Era and the Rightly Guided Caliphate*:

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- Letter from ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib regarding the purchase of a slave-girl who had a husband[1]

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- The Prophet's ﷺ covenant to the Zoroastrian relatives of Salmān al-Fārsī
- The Prophet's ﷺ covenant to the Jews
- The Prophet's ﷺ covenants to the Christians

(1) This account was narrated by Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr in his Sunan, part two, hadith no. 1950. It reports that Murrah ibn Sharāḥīl gifted a slave-girl to ʿAlī (may Allah be pleased with him), but when ʿAlī learned she had a husband, he returned her. Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr also reported similar accounts in which companions refused to keep women who had spouses—even if the husband was a slave—such as from ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (no. 1951), ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf (no. 1953), Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (no. 1954), and others—may Allah be pleased with them all.

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Chapter Three: Testimonies of Non-Muslims on the Existence of the Prophet and Islam

In truth, we are in no need of such testimonies after all that has preceded, but we cite them here only to demonstrate how truth reinforces itself. Logically and reasonably, with the early and rapid expansion of Islam eastward and westward—accompanied by fierce battles with the two great powers of the time, Persia and Byzantium—it is to be expected that the writings of these civilizations would document such momentous events in their own lands.

As for the book we have selected here, it was chosen specifically to serve as a testimony drawn from the very heart of the writings of those hostile to and misrepresenting Islam. It is the work of the historian and scholar Robert G. Hoyland, who was one of the students of Patricia Crone—whose fabrications we shall examine in the following chapter, particularly her claims that Mecca was not located where it is known today, and her attempts to deny the very existence of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

The book in question is Robert G. Hoyland's 1997 work, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*. In it, Hoyland examines nearly 120 texts dating from 620 CE to 780 CE, offering documentation of non-Muslim writings on early Islam—that is, from the Prophet's migration (Hijrah) in 622 CE, through his death in 632 CE, and up to near the close of the second Islamic century. Hoyland collected Greek,

Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Latin, Jewish, Persian, and even Chinese texts, being a specialist in the medieval history of the Middle East[1].

Although many of these excerpts falsely portray Islam as criminal, violent, and oppressive, such misrepresentation is expected from the priests of religions who were exploiting their people in the name of faith. Defeated time and again by Muslim forces, they sought to incite their populations against the Muslims by any means and to distort their image so as to stir hatred, particularly as the justice and noble conduct of the Muslim conquerors were drawing people to Islam in great numbers. Egypt serves as a prime example, where the Muslim conquerors rescued the Coptic Christians from the cruelty and oppression of Roman Christians.

Because the historical events recounted in these testimonies align so consistently with what Muslims have recorded in their own texts, Professor Michael G. Morony of the University of California, Los Angeles, commended Hoyland's book, stating: "Hoyland's treatment of the materials is judicious, honest, complex, and extremely useful.[2]"

This stands in contrast to his criticism of Patricia Crone's work, as we will see later.

Important Excerpts from Non-Muslim Testimonies

We will not present a full translation of the book, of course. Even Dr. Jādallāh al-Sayyid Maḥmūd[3] hesitated to share all that he translated, out of moral concern due to the slanders it contains against the Prophet and Islam, particularly those made by certain priests and saints.

For this reason, I will select only certain excerpts that clearly mention the Prophet Muḥammad by name at an early date—refuting those who tamper with history and geography by claiming that Islam was merely an "Umayyad invention" that only emerged after 50 AH.

I will also include a few quotations that contain fair and accurate acknowledgments of the Prophet's character and that of his followers.

And so we proceed…

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(1) He served as a professor of Islamic history at the Oriental Institute of the University of Oxford, and he is currently a professor of Middle Eastern Islamic history at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World in New York.

(2) Michael G. Morony. International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 31, No. 3. (Aug., 1999), pp. 452-453

(3) Hoyland's book is exceptionally difficult due to the presence of archaic historical and religious names, as well as terms that have greatly changed over time or have become obsolete altogether. For this reason, I preferred that Dr. Jād handle the translation of Hoyland's book, while I undertook all other translations unrelated to it.

Testimonies on the Character of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Muslims

Among the most striking of these accounts is what Hoyland records on page 180 of his book, citing the letter of Simeon of Rev Ardashir, who was being admonished by Ishoʿbokht in despair as he attempted to remain among the believers of the church. The end of the letter contains this rare admission:

"As for the Arabs, to whom God has granted power at this time over the world, you know well how they behave towards us. Not only do they not oppose Christianity, they even praise our faith, honor the priests and saints of our Lord, and offer support to churches and monasteries. So why do the people of Marw reject their own faith on the pretext of the Arabs' belief? Even the people of Marw themselves admit that the Arabs did not force them to abandon their faith, but merely asked them to give up half their possessions to retain it. And yet they chose to abandon the faith—whose reward is eternal—in order to keep half of their fleeting wealth.[1]"

Another remarkable testimony appears in Hoyland's treatment of events around 660 CE, in chapter 30 of Bedrosian's translation. It states:

"At that time, a man from among the descendants of Ishmael appeared, named Muḥammad. He was a guide sent by God to lead them on the path of truth. He taught them to believe in the God of Abraham, particularly as he himself taught and had knowledge of various histories. Because the command had come from above, he ordered them all to unite in faith, to forsake the veneration of vanities, and to revere the Living God who had manifested Himself to their forefather Abraham.

Muḥammad forbade them from eating carrion, drinking wine, lying, and committing fornication. He said: 'God has promised this land to Abraham and to his son after him, for all time—and that promise was fulfilled during the time when God was pleased with Israel. But now, you are the children of Abraham, and God will fulfill for you what He promised to Abraham and his son. Only love the God of Abraham, and go forth to take the land that God gave to your father Abraham, and no one will overcome you in battle, for God is with you.'"

Hoyland continues several pages later in chapter 31 of Bedrosian's translation, recounting a Jewish plot to spark conflict between Muslims and Christians in Jerusalem after the city's conquest and the building of the mosque. Had it not been for the justice and prudence of the Muslims, a great injustice and mass killing of Christians could have taken place. This account stands in stark contrast to the portrayal of Muslims as bloodthirsty and barbaric:

(1) Isho'yahb III, Ep. 14C, 251 [pp. 180-181]

“Then [p. 132] the Jews devised a diabolical plan to fill all of Jerusalem with blood and exterminate all the Christians. It happened that a nobleman from among the sons of Ishmael came to worship at the prayer place and encountered three leading Jewish men who had just slaughtered two pigs and placed them in the Muslim prayer area. Blood spilled on the walls and floor of the building.

The man stopped them and said something to them upon seeing them. They replied and departed. The man then entered the prayer area, saw the vile scene, and quickly left to catch them. Failing to find them, he returned home silently. Soon, many Muslims entered the place and saw the defilement, spreading the grim news throughout the city.

The Jews accused the Christians of defiling the place of worship. The prince ordered that all Christians be gathered in one place. Just before their execution, the Muslim man arrived and said, ‘Why should so much blood be spilled in vain? Gather all the Jews and I will identify the guilty ones among them.’

As the Jews were assembled, he walked among them and immediately recognized the three men he had seen earlier [p. 133]. The Arabs arrested them and interrogated them until the plot was revealed. Since their prince was among those present, he ordered that the six conspirators be executed (the prince being a Muslim, not a Jew, as is likely intended). He then permitted the rest of the Jews to return to their homes.”

The following account may seem surprising at first glance. Though framed as a deliberate distortion and slander against Muslims, I see it as an indirect testament to the generosity and virtuous treatment extended by Muslim conquerors toward the people of newly acquired lands, as commanded by Allah and His Messenger. This would explain why so many people embraced Islam after witnessing the noble character of the Muslims. Consider the letter cited by Hoyland from Athanasius of Balad, Patriarch of Antioch, between 683 and 687 CE:

“A dreadful report has reached our humble ears regarding the sinful Christians. Foolish and insatiable men, worshippers of their bellies, have thoughtlessly and shamelessly joined in celebrations with the pagans (referring to Muslims, as the context and Hoyland’s commentary suggest). Wretched women have mingled with these pagans in immoral and indecent ways.

Everyone eats from their sacrificial offerings (referring to Muslim animal sacrifices such as the *Uḍḥiyyah*). They have strayed in their negligence from the instructions and counsel of the apostles, who often cried out to the faithful of Christ to abstain from fornication, from eating strangled animals, from blood, and from food sacrificed to idols. Otherwise, they risk becoming partners with demons and sharing in their impure table.[1]”

(1) Athanasius of Balad, Letter, 128-129 [p. 148]

Here, we must ask: what indecency is he referring to when Islam came to enjoin both men and women with *ḥijāb*, modesty, and lowering the gaze? And what idolatry, when Islam came with uncompromising *tawḥīd*, while others wallowed in tritheism and contradiction? Indeed, these complaints—though wrapped in insult—are but witnesses to the moral impact Islam had on its earliest opponents.

Now—before proceeding to the next excerpt—let me clarify a few matters regarding *jizyah* in Islam. The Prophet ﷺ instructed his Companions to offer three options to any nation they encountered, as confirmed in authentic narrations: either to enter Islam (the religion of monotheism, humanity, equality, and justice), or to remain upon their religion while paying *jizyah* (a declaration of non-hostility and refraining from fighting the Muslims), or to go to war[1].

The *jizyah* is a modest annual payment—ranging from one to four gold dinars—collected only from able-bodied adult men who are capable of bearing arms. Paying it is a formal expression of surrender and non-aggression, whereby the defeated party declares their submission and renounces any support for hostilities against the Muslim authority. Allah says: **"Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day, who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful, and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture—until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled."** *(Sūrat al-Tawbah: 29)*

That said, not every non-Muslim is subject to war with Muslims, and the life of a Muslim is not meant to be a continual campaign against others. A Muslim ruler may choose treaties, truces, and peace agreements depending on the circumstances of the Muslims: **"And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah. Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing."** *(Sūrat al-Anfāl: 61)*

Additionally, Islam upholds the rights of *dhimmīs*—non-Muslims who live under Muslim protection—as well as *mu'āhadūn* (those under treaty) and *musta'minūn* (those granted security). Allah commands kindness and justice toward those who do not fight the Muslims: **"Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes—from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly."** *(Sūrat al-Mumtaḥanah: 8)*

(1) Muslim narrated in his Ṣaḥīḥ and others as well, that the Prophet ﷺ said: "When you meet your enemy from among the polytheists, call them to three options. Whichever one they respond to, accept it from them and withhold from fighting them. Call them to Islam—if they respond, accept it from them and refrain from harming them. If they refuse, call them to pay the jizyah—if they agree, accept it and refrain from harming them. But if they refuse, then seek help from Allah against them and fight them."

Women, children, the weak, monks, and others are exempt from *jizyah*. Compare this tax—ranging from one to four dinars per year—to the *zakāh* of a wealthy Muslim who owns one hundred thousand dinars and must pay 2.5% annually, i.e., 2,500 dinars!

Will Durant, the famous American historian, wrote in *The Story of Civilization*[1]:

"The *dhimmīs*—Christians, Zoroastrians, Jews, and Sabeans—enjoyed a degree of tolerance during the Umayyad Caliphate that was unmatched in the Christian world of that time. They were free to practice their religion, retained their churches and temples, and paid only a per capita tax, varying by income, from one to four dinars. This tax applied only to adult males capable of military service. Monks, women, minors, slaves, the elderly, the disabled, the blind, and the poor were exempt. In return, *dhimmīs* were exempt from military service—or more precisely, they were not permitted to serve—and they were not subject to *zakāh*, which amounted to 2.5% of annual wealth. The government was obligated to protect them. Although their testimony was not accepted in Islamic courts, they were governed internally by their own leaders, judges, and laws.[2]"

Now, we return to Hoyland's work, particularly pages 195–197, where he discusses *John bar Penkaye* (d. 687 CE):

"First and foremost, John was not hostile to Arab rule. Despite using negative terms such as 'barbarians' and references to their 'hatred and fury in their food,' John acknowledged the Arabs' tolerance toward Christians. Christianity and its adherents were held in esteem: 'Before their rise, God had prepared them to show respect to Christians, so they had a special command from God concerning our places of worship—to honor them.' The Arabs made no attempt to force conversions: 'Their raiding parties would annually go far afield and to various islands, bringing captives from every corner under the heavens. Yet from each person they only requested the *madatta* (poll tax) and allowed them to remain on whatever religion they chose.' John described the rule of Muʿāwiyah by saying: 'Justice flourished in his era, and peace spread throughout his domain. He allowed everyone to live as they pleased.' He also added that harvests were abundant, and trade had greatly increased. Ironically, John's only complaint was the *lack* of persecution. He lamented: 'There was no distinction made between pagans and Christians, between believers and Jews.'

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(1) The Story of Civilization is by far the most renowned work of the historian Will Durant. It is a monumental series spanning 42 volumes, with several parts co-authored by his wife, Ariel. The entire series was compiled into 10 bound volumes. It stands as one of the rare works that presented a fair and comprehensive account of Islam and Islamic civilization in all its dimensions. Volume 4, dedicated entirely to Islam across six sub-volumes, is among the largest in size.

(2) Will and Ariel Durant, The Story of Civilization, translated by Muḥammad Badrān, Volume 13 (the second part of the fourth volume, titled The Age of Faith 2), Dār al-Jīl Edition, Beirut – Lebanon.

Secondly, although John did understand the coming of the Arabs as part of divine punishment (in line with biblical themes), he also employed more neutral, non-religious explanations. For instance, he presented Muhammad as a guide and teacher, noting that his instruction to the Arabs concerned the worship of the One God—consistent with the teachings of the ancient Law (i.e., the monotheistic message of the prophets). He also described Muhammad as a lawgiver, observing that the Arabs adhered to the Sunna of Muhammad... to the extent that they imposed the death penalty on anyone who transgressed his rulings.' The term *Sunna* here suggests an inherited tradition, though it is unclear whether John understood it as a fixed legislative corpus. It is most likely that he was merely relaying the message as Muslims themselves had conveyed it—that they uphold and enforce the example of the Prophet."

Another account cited by Hoyland in his book (p. 225) illustrates an example of the justice of Muslims and how they were not bloodthirsty, contrary to how many Christian clerics sadly portrayed them. He narrates the story of a pilgrim named Willibald in the year 720 CE, who wished to visit Jerusalem but under circumstances that raised suspicion of espionage:

"Willibald left England in 720 CE as a young man and traveled through France to Rome, where he remained for three years under the monastic system. Then... he asked his friends and companions to support him with their prayers... until he could reach the walls of the city of Jerusalem. On Easter Day, 28 March 723, he departed with seven companions to the Holy Land.

But upon arriving in the land of the Muslims, in a coastal city called Tartus, and then walking as far as Homs, the pagan Muslims (as they were described) discovered that some foreign travelers had arrived and quickly arrested them, suspecting them of being spies. They brought them before an elderly and wealthy man, who said: 'I have seen many others who came here, their fellow countrymen from those parts of the world. They meant no harm. All they wanted was to fulfill their religious obligations (i.e., visiting Jerusalem as a Christian holy site).

Nevertheless, the governor ordered, 'Keep them imprisoned until we hear from the king what should be done with them.' But the imprisonment was not harsh. One merchant, although unable to ransom them, ensured they received food, bathed on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and were taken to church and the market on Sundays. 'The people of that city treated them well and were eager to visit them there.'

They then encountered a Spanish man whose brother was a royal chamberlain and the commander who had transported them from Cyprus. Eventually, they were taken before the Muslim ruler, who was referred to as the Commander of the Faithful—*Mirmumnus* (an apparent distortion of *Amīr al-Muʾminīn*). Upon reviewing their case, the caliph responded: 'Why should we punish them? They have committed no offense against us. Grant them permission to go.'"

When Hoyland turned, on page 244, to ancient Chinese records, he referenced the encyclopedic historical work of T'ung tien, begun in 768 CE and published in 801 CE, in which he noted the arrival of Muslim envoys at the court of the Chinese king Yung-hui, who ruled from 650 to 656 CE.

He then quoted, from pages 245–249 of his book, an extensive testimony by a Chinese man named Tu Huan who had been taken captive in Iraq and later returned to China in 762 CE. Tu Huan gave a detailed account of Muslims and their lands—including their food, agriculture, animals, clothing, and customs. Among what he said was:

"In the *Ching-hsing chi* by Tu Huan, it is mentioned: [The capital] has another name—al-Kūfah. The Arab king is called *mumen* (believer), and his capital is located there. The men and women are beautiful and tall (presumably in comparison to Chinese people), their clothes are bright and clean, and their manners are refined.

When a woman leaves her home, she must cover her face regardless of her social status—whether noble or common (a custom that in many ancient cultures was reserved for princesses and queens). They perform ritual prayers five times daily. They eat meat and fast, and they consider the ritual slaughter of animals essential (i.e., they prohibit eating animals that have died by strangulation, bludgeoning, or other non-ritual means).

They wear silver belts at their waists and attach silver daggers to them. They prohibit drinking alcohol and listening to music.

When people dispute with one another, they do not resort to physical violence.

There is also a public hall that can accommodate tens of thousands of people (likely referring to the Grand Mosque). Every seven days, the king comes out to lead religious services (referring to Jumuʿah prayer). He ascends a tall pulpit and advises the masses regarding the sacred law.

He says, 'Human life is difficult, and the path of righteousness is not easy. Adultery is a grave sin. Among the greatest crimes is theft, even in its most trivial form; deceiving people with words; ensuring one's own safety by endangering others; cheating the poor; or oppressing the weak. Do not think that those who were killed in the path of God are dead; rather, they are alive, receiving provision from their Lord. Kill your enemies, and you shall be granted a bliss beyond imagination.'"

Testimonies on Apostasy from Previous Religions and Embracing Islam

The Chinese source Tu Huan, in the same context, refers to the sweeping spread of Islam throughout those lands and how they became a center to which all surrounding regions were connected and from which all manner of goods were brought. He states:

"The whole land has been transformed; people follow [Islamic beliefs] just as a river follows its course. The law is applied, but with leniency, and the dead are buried with care. People are not deprived of anything that the land produces—whether within the walls of a great city or in the heart of modest villages. [Their land] has become the center of the world, where countless goods are available at low prices."

For a closer perspective, we may consider what Hoyland quotes on page 154 concerning the conquest of Egypt in 641 CE, drawn from the words of John, Bishop of Nikiu. He speaks with grief about the many Egyptian Christians who embraced Islam—including some who had previously sought refuge in the Monastery of Sinai from the oppression of Roman Christians. In words steeped in bitterness and distortion, John of Nikiu maligns these events, vilifies those Christians who entered Islam, and slanders the Prophet ﷺ and this new faith:

"Now many Egyptians, who were false Christians, denied the holy Orthodox faith and the life-giving baptism, and adopted the religion of the Muslims, enemies of God. They accepted the doctrine of the accursed beast, who is Muḥammad, and became sinners among those heathens. They took up arms and fought the Christians. One of them, named John, who had belonged to the Chalcedonian Monastery of Sinai, embraced the religion of Islam, abandoned his post as a monk, took up the sword, and persecuted the Christians who remained faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ.[1]"

In truth, it was the noble character of the Muslims that played the greatest role in leading the conquered peoples to accept their religion. Even the jizyah is seen by some Western historians as one of the very factors that contributed significantly to the spread of Islam, given that its modest annual rate could not be compared to the heavy burdens of taxes (*mukūs*)[2] and levies that those populations were constantly subjected to by their kings and emperors.

Thus, one of the most renowned Western books discussing the policies of nations and their laws is *The Spirit of the Laws* (De l'esprit des lois) by the French philosopher Montesquieu, written in 1748 CE. After he spoke about the numerous and bizarre taxes imposed by kings, to the extent that the satirical phrase "a tax for breathing air" became common, he continued his account with his first mention of the Muslim conquests:

"These excessive taxes (imposed by those kings in their lands) contributed to the astonishing ease with which the Muslims achieved their conquests, as the peoples found themselves subject to a simple tax (the *jizyah*) that was easily paid and collected, as opposed to the endless series

(1) Chronicle, 121. 10-11

(2) *Mukūs* refers to the unlawful taking of people's wealth without any service in return, such as tolls or taxes imposed on travelers or passers-by with no benefit provided to them in exchange.

of injustices that had been envisioned by the emperors in their meticulous (i.e., miserly) greed. The people saw that they were happier being subjected to a nation considered 'uncivilized' (as they described the Arabs, given their perceived insignificance before Islam) than to a corrupt government where all the perils of liberty were no longer available, and all the discomforts of present servitude were present.[1]"

So, what might we imagine? Beyond all of the above, the Muslims did not burden anyone beyond his capacity, as the jizyah was canceled for the wealthy who became impoverished (and they were even supported from the Muslim treasury), along with their being afforded full protection. If the Muslims ceased their protection, they would no longer take the jizyah from them.

This indeed occurred when the Romans gathered their forces to fight Abū ʿUbaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ (may Allah be pleased with him). He determined to assemble all his forces in response, meaning that he would have to relinquish protection of the people of al-Shām at that time, as he could not split his forces between fighting the Romans and protecting them. Thus, he returned their *jizyah* and *kharāj* due to his inability to protect them! Their response was to pray for his return and victory in his battle[2].

From this... and because of all the above, apostasy from Christianity and other religions became widespread, as did intermarriage between the women of these peoples and Muslim men. This brought up new doctrinal questions for Christian bishops of that time, such as Jacob of Edessa (d. 708 CE), one of the most famous Syriac writers in Egypt and the Levant.

Hoyland cites in his book (pages 160–161) some of Jacob's statements concerning these issues, including his threat to apostates from Christianity that if they returned, they would not regain the same status as a Christian who had never apostatized: "A Christian who has become a Muslim or a pagan, and then returns to Christianity, should not be rebaptized. Instead, the bishop should recite over him the prayer of the penitent and impose on him a period of penance as expiation.[3]"

He also stated regarding Christian women who married Muslims: "A woman married to a Muslim, and who claims that she will convert to Islam, should not be given the *host* (a piece of bread they claim to be the body of Christ and distributed to congregants) unless she receives an appropriate penalty.[4]"

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(1) See: The Spirit of the Laws by Montesquieu, vol. 2, translated by ʿĀdil Zʿaytar, Hindawi Foundation, free online edition, Book 13, Chapter 16, Muslim Conquests (Note: there is an error in the table of contents indicating page 374, but it is actually on p. 400).

(2) Mentioned by Abū Yūsuf in his book al-Kharāj, p. 166.

(3) Jacob of Edessa, Replies to John, A13 [pp. 162-163]

(4) Jacob of Edessa, Replies to Addai, no. 75 [p. 163]

Thus, Hoyland comments on p. 163 of his book:

"These two decisions demonstrate how early conversion to Islam became a serious issue, vividly portrayed through the contemporary perspective that lamented, 'Many of the people who were members of the church will deny the true faith of the Christians, along with the Holy Cross and the great holy mysteries, without being subjected to any punishment or lashes or beatings.' However, although Jacob (Yaʿqūb) might have wished to announce to apostates the opportunity to return and be accepted, he was not advocating for a 'tolerate everything' policy. He included a veiled threat in the first excerpt, declaring that such apostasy could deprive a person of the grace of baptism; and in the second excerpt, he insisted that, 'Even if there was no fear of her apostasy,' some form of 'rebuke' was necessary 'to ensure that other women at least would fear stumbling into that path as well.'"

We will conclude this selection of excerpts here to pave the way for the conclusion of this chapter, in which we present the chronological sequence of early non-Muslim references to the beginnings of Islam, as cited by Hoyland in his book.

A Historical Timeline of Nations' Testimonies on the Early Days of Islam

Let me remind you that the Prophet's migration ﷺ was in 622 CE, and he passed away in 632 CE. The testimonies contained in the book, whose titles we are about to read, include the same well-known details familiar to even the youngest student of Islamic history—from the conquests against Rome and Persia to the arrival of Islam in China. Some of them also documented internal Islamic events with precision, such as the era of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the discord between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them both). (The book contains approximately 120 texts, as we mentioned earlier)[1]. Now, we begin reading from the table of contents after the preface and introduction:

First: Sources that Mentioned Islam Incidentally

3- Greek sources:

- A Christian Apologist of 634
- John Moschus (d. 619 or 634)

(1) Hoyland's book contains 872 pages, divided into four parts. It contains no images, only transcriptions of historical texts in Greek, Coptic, Armenian, Syriac, Jewish, Christian, Persian, and Chinese, along with research on their documentation, assessments of their authenticity and originality, clarifications if later additions were made to them, and commentary. Other books also contain similar early historical testimonies in some of their sections, such *as Christian-Muslim Relations, a Bibliographical History* by David Thomas and others. He also contributed to the book *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity With Early Islam*.

- Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (d. ca. 639)
- Pope Martin I (649-55)
- Maximus the Confessor (d. 662)
- Anti-Jewish Polemicists of the Seventh Century
- The Miracles of S. Demetrim and S. George
- Anastasius of Sinai (d. ca. 700)
- Patriarch Germanus (715-30) and Iconoclasm
- Cosmas of Jerusalem (wr. mid-eighth c.) and Hymnography
- Stephen the Sabaite (d. 794)

4- Sources from Western Syria, Coptic, and Armenian:

- Fragment on the Arab Conquests
- Thomas the Presbyter (wr. ca. 640)
- Homily on the Child Saints of Babylon
- Gabriel of Qartmin (d. 648)
- Sebeos, Bishop of the Bagratunis (wr. 660s)
- Benjamin I, Patriarch of Alexandria (626-65)
- A Maronite Chronicler
- George of Resh'aina (d. ca. 680)
- Daniel, Bishop of Edessa (665-84)
- Athanasius of Balad, Patriarch of Antioch (683-687)
- Isaac of Rakoti, Patriarch of Alexandria (689-92)
- John, Bishop of Nikiu (640s or 690s)
- Theodotus of Amida (d. 698)
- Jacob of Edessa (d. 708)
- Zacharias, Bishop of Sakha (d. 720s)
- Simeon of the Olives (d. 734)

5- Sources from Eastern Syria:

- Isho'yahb III of Adiabene (d. 659)
- A Chronicler of Khuzistan (wr. ca. 660s)
- Rabban Hormizd (d. ca. 670)

- George I (661-81) and the Synod of 676
- John bar Penkaye (wr. 687)
- Hnanisho' the Exegete (d. 700)
- John of Daylam (d. 738)
- Isho'bokht, Metropolitan of Fars (ca. 730-780)
- The Abbots of the Convent of Sabrisho'
- Isho'dnah of Basra (wr. ca. 850)
- Thomas of Marga (wr. 860s)

6- Latin Sources:

- Fredegar, a Frankish Chronicler (wr. 650s)
- Arculf (fl. 670s) and Early Islamic Jerusalem
- Willibald (fl. 720s) and Other Pilgrims

7- Jewish, Persian, and Chinese Sources:

- Jewish Sources
- Persian Sources
- Chinese Sources:
- T'ung tien
- The Official T'ang History
- Ts'e-fu yuan-kuei

Secondly: Sources that deliberately mention Islam

8- The End of the World and Visions:

The Syriac Texts:

- Ps.-Ephraem
- Ps.-Methodius
- The Edessene Ps.-Methodius and John the Little
- Bahira
- Ps.-Ezra

The Coptic-Arabic Texts:

- Ps.-Shenute
- Ps.-Athanasius
- Samuel of Qalamun and Pisentius of Qift
- Coptic Daniel, XIV Vision
- The Apocalypse of Peter/ Book of the Rolls

The Greek Texts:

- Ps.-Methodius, Greek Translation
- Greek Daniel, First Vision
- The Vision of Enoch the Just
- Stephen of Alexandria
- The Andreas Salos Apocalypse

The Hebrew Texts:

- The Secrets of Rabbi Simon ben Yohai
- Pesiqta rabbati
- The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer
- Jewish Apocalypse on the Umayyads
- Signs of the Messiah
- A Judaeo-Byzantine Daniel

The Persian Texts:

- Bahman yasht
- Jamasp Namag
- Bundahishn
- Denkard
- A Pahlavi Ballad on the End of Times
- The Prophecy of Rostam
- A Judaeo-Persian Daniel

9- The Individuals Mentioned in the Martyrologies[1]

The Greek Texts:

- Sixty Martyrs of Gaza (d. 638)
- George the Black (d. 650s)
- A Christian Arab of Sinai (d. ca. 660)
- Peter of Capitolias (d. 715)
- Sixty Pilgrims in Jerusalem (d. 724)
- Elias of Damascus (d. 779)
- Romanus the Neomartyr (d. 780)

The Coptic-Arabic Texts:

- Menas the Monk
- Thomas, Bishop of Damascus

The Armenian Texts:

- David of Dwin (d. ca. 703)
- Vahan (d. 737)

The Syriac Texts.

10- Records and Histories:

The Syriac Texts:

- Short Chronologies
- Theophilus of Edessa and the Syriac Common Source
- The Zuqnin Chronicler
- The Ehnesh Inscription
- Dionysius of Tellmahre
- The Chronicles of 819 and 846
- Elias of Nisibis (d. 1049)

(1) The term Martyrology refers to lists of individuals holding special status in Christianity, such as martyrs, saints, and the like.

The Latin Texts:

- The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741 and the
- Hispanic Chronicle of 754

The Greek Texts:

- Theophanes the Confessor (d. 818)
- Patriarch Nicephorus (d. 828)
- A Short Chronology ad annum 818

The Armenian Texts.

The Christian Arabic Texts:

- Agapius, Bishop of Manbij (wr. 940s)
- Eutychius of Alexandria
- The Chronicle of Siirt
- The History of the Patriarchs

The Jewish Texts.

The Samaritan Texts.

11- Apologetics and Debates:

The Syriac Texts:

- Patriarch John I and an Arab Commander
- A Monk of Beth J: Iale and an Arab Notable
- Timothy I (780-823)
- Bahira

The Greek Texts:

- John of Damascus (wr. 730s)
- The Correspondence of Leo III (717-41) and ʻUmar II (717-20)

The Christian Arabic Texts:

- Fī tathlīth Allāh al-Wāḥid
- Papyrus Schott Reinhard no. 438
- Masā'il wa-Ajwiba ʻAqliya wa-Ilāhiya

The Jewish Texts:

- The Ten Wise Jews
- Targum Ps.-Jonathan

The Persian Texts.

The Latin Texts:

- Istoria de Mahomet
- Tultusceptru de libro domni Metobii

Thirdly: The Writing of Early Islamic History

12- Non-Islamic Conceptions of Islam:

- The Tool of God's Wrath
- Deliverance from the Wicked Kingdom
- An Age of Adversity
- The Fourth Beast
- Abrahamic/Primitive Monotheism
- The New Jews
- A Worldly Religion

13- Use of Non-Islamic Sources – Practical Application:

- Islam in the First Century AH
- Sacred Direction in Islam
- The Conquest of Egypt

14- Use of Non-Islamic Sources – Polemical Application:

- What is the Source of the Observation?
- What is the Character of the Observation?
- What is the Subject of the Observation?

Fourthly: Excursus

A. The Canons and Resolutions of Jacob of Edessa

B. The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741 and Its Eastern Source

C. An Outline of the Syriac Common Source

D. The Passion of David of Dwin

E. Georgian Historical Writing

This concludes the excerpt from the book's table of contents. We have excluded the sections that contain Islamic sources to focus solely on the non-Islamic sources.

Chapter Four: Refuting Patricia Crone's Falsehoods

Now... imagine, after this enormous amount of historical facts, from east to west, including inscriptions, monuments, history, manuscripts, testimonies, and documents, that some individuals, blinded by prejudice, would dare to deny all of that!

The audacity to claim that Islam was a fabrication of Muʿāwiyah during the Umayyad era!

That Mecca was not in its known location but near al-Shām!

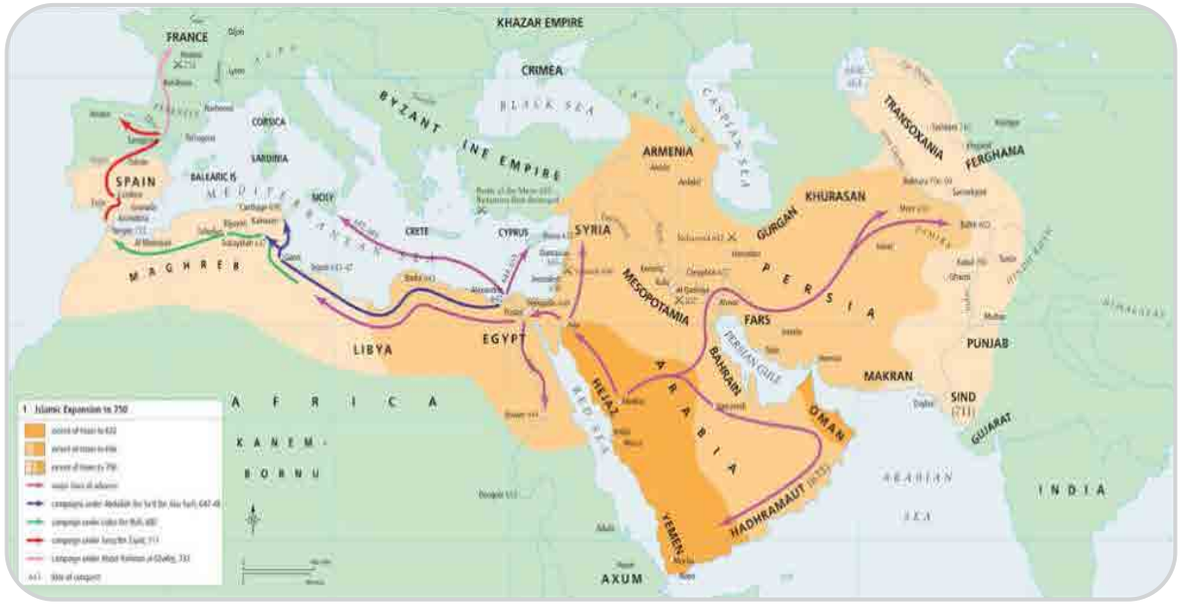
That Muḥammad began his call from northern Arabia!

And so on, with what Western specialists themselves have described, as we will see shortly, as "gymnastics"!

The issue here is not with the manipulations of such orientalist bigots, who disregard the history of entire nations that knew of Islam and the prophet within the first 50 years, and the subsequent conquests that extended to the borders of China in the east and southern Spain and Europe in the west.

The real problem lies with those who believe this delusion and think that what people like Patricia present as "scientific research" truly has any connection to science! Their argument is that such lies are presented in an "academic" book from universities where everyone knows the intertwinement of political goals within their orientalist departments, and how the influence of powerful donors shapes their agendas, with financial support and spending on the university ultimately elevating falsehood over the voice of truth for a time.

A map from the University of Oxford[1] (Islamic Studies Online) illustrates Mecca, Medina, and the spread of Islamic conquests in three stages:



1. Dark orange: Islamic conquests until the death of the Prophet in 632 CE.
2. Light orange: Conquests under the four caliphs until 656 CE.
3. Lighter orange: Umayyad conquests until 750 CE.

Knowledge Without Integrity

There is a famous saying: “Strip a people of their history; within a generation, they will become a mass of rabble, and in another generation, you will be able to rule them as if they were a flock of sheep.”

Although some attribute it to the shrewd politician and Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, I couldn’t find it directly linked to him. However, anyone versed in the history of modern intellectual colonization knows its accuracy and the tremendous efforts made by some countries in Europe and America to strip entire nations of their history.

Therefore, it is not surprising to find entire departments in European and American universities dedicated to “Islamic History,” “Oriental Studies,” “Middle Eastern Studies,” or even “Arabic Language,” “Philosophy,” “Law,” or “Legal Studies,” where Orientalists and even some apostate Muslims—or those who have been declared unbelievers—are invited to study or teach. Thus, we

(1) You can view the details and the map in the article Spread of Islam at the link:

http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t253/e17

see that the majority of these Orientalists and Muslims harbor resentment and animosity toward Islam, with only a few who truly possess knowledge or impartiality.

How dangerous is knowledge when it abandons neutrality and integrity, turning into a tool in the hands of bias, fanaticism, and vengeance, or simply for the sake of taking revenge?

Indeed, the efforts of decades in these universities have mostly contributed to undermining Islamic history and its facts, distorting its Shariah and rulings, attacking its figures from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself to the greatest of the Companions, and down to the most renowned caliphs and leaders, reaching the Qur'an and its authenticity as well as the Prophetic Hadiths. Even the Arabic language itself has not been spared from their assaults!

Orientalists

As for Orientalists, the majority of them have been known for centuries for their agenda. Under the pretext of studying the East and conveying its knowledge to Europe and America, most of them feel justified in fabricating lies and distortions to alienate non-Muslims from Islam, tarnish its image, and manipulate historical facts. These Orientalists fall into two categories:

1. Those whose blatant fabrications are so absurd that anyone with even the slightest knowledge of ancient and modern history rejects them. Among these are Michael A. Cook and Patricia Crone. Their writings carry no real academic weight except among non-specialists and beginning university students, to whom these are presented as curricula.
2. Those who pretend to be neutral, and these are the more dangerous. They mix their lies and distortions with partial acknowledgments of truth, some aspects of scholarly research and historical inquiry, and occasional praise of Muslims. Uncovering their falsehoods requires meticulous effort to track their methodology and expose its flaws to the public. Among the most famous of these are Ignaz Goldziher, Bodley, Lammens, and Zwemer.

Nevertheless, Allah refuses to reveal the truth except through the efforts of some Orientalists who exposed the lies of others and defended Islam[1]. In fact, some of them embraced Islam themselves, standing as a testament against those Orientalists who are enemies of knowledge[2].

(1) Among those who defended Islam are the Orientalist Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (who is said to have converted to Islam), George Sarton, Emile Dermenghem, Wilfrid Blunt, and Edward Said, particularly in his books *Orientalism* and *Covering Islam*.

(2) Among those who embraced Islam are the Orientalist Fritz Krenkow, who adopted the name Muḥammad Salim Al-Karnakawī, Gyula Germanus who took the name Abd al-Karīm Germanus, and Alphonse-Étienne Dinet who took the name Naṣr al-Dīn Dinet.

Apostate Muslims

We see an example of this in the denier of the Sunnah who was declared an apostate by Al-Azhar in Egypt: Aḥmad Ṣubhī Manṣūr. He fled to America, where he was granted a teaching position in law at Harvard University. There, he propagated bizarre claims that clash completely with historical facts—claims so absurd that even a child could refute them—such as his assertion that Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa is not in Palestine[1]. This reflects his blatant collusion with the Zionist lobby in America.

Likewise, Naṣr Hāmid Abū Zayd, who treated the Qur'an as a text open to critique, restructuring, and reinterpretation (perhaps following in the footsteps of Taha Hussein, who studied under European professors attacking Islam). When his apostasy was confirmed and a court ruling was issued to separate him from his wife, Naṣr Hāmid traveled with her to the Netherlands to become a professor of Islamic studies at Leiden University.

These universities throw their arms wide open to welcome anyone deficient in knowledge and faith to obtain their degrees or to teach there. We (at Dalāil Center) have already addressed one such case in the past: Adnān Ibrāhīm's dissertation to obtain a PhD from the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Vienna in Austria[2], which contained major methodological contradictions that were exposed from an academic research perspective[3].

This is just a small indicator of the "quality" of those dominating the teaching of Islamic history in most European and American universities. They are notorious for distorting Arabic texts, manipulating them, misquoting sources, and highlighting fabricated and rejected reports

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(1) The denial that Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa is in Palestine is a hallmark of this generation waging an internal war on Islam. We also see the writer Youssef Ziedan making similar claims to undermine the history of Muslims, and even that of Christians and Jews for those who understand, as if they are asking us to discard all documented historical facts known to non-Arabs and non-Muslims, including testimonies from Western historians themselves.

(2) *Tanāqudāt Manhajiyyah* by Yūsuf Samrīn, (Dalāil Center, 1438 AH/2017 CE).

(3) The intellectual war to distort Islam goes beyond universities to establishing entire "Islamic" centers that present to the public and media a version of Islam that is not true Islam, after hiring individuals who nominally affiliate with Islam to work there. Then this nonsense is spread as if it represents the religion! How often do we hear today about an Islamic center or mosque in Europe or America where a woman leads men in prayer? Or where a woman prays uncovered shoulder-to-shoulder with a man? Worse, some of those "imams" and "preachers" openly defend sexual deviance and sometimes even admit that they themselves are sexually deviant. If we understand the political roots of the game, we will understand how and why such stories periodically surface to distort and misrepresent Islam before non-Muslims, and then influence a generation of Muslim youth, most of whom today receive no basic knowledge of their faith, either in education or in the media.

in their research as if they were facts, while at the same time disregarding authentic texts and unanimously accepted reports in the science of Hadith and among scholars.

In fact, the most astonishing—and the most dangerous—aspect of this phenomenon is the extreme audacity of those who outright defy historical facts, to the point of engaging in what Western critics themselves have called "acrobatics" with the texts, as we will see shortly. They deny well-known global events and historical truths that have been established for thousands of years, recognized by the world East and West, and acknowledged by Muslims and Arabs alike, treating them with utter disregard. They go so far as to manipulate translations between Arabic, Greek, and English, altering names and distorting letters and words. Some have even gone to the extent of denying the very existence of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ himself, or relocating Makkah by hundreds of miles, or changing its history and all the early events of Islam with the stroke of a pen!

Patricia Crone and the Parallel World

Since the late twentieth century, books and stories of science fiction have been filled with tales of the multiverse or parallel worlds, in which alternate versions of reality exist—where time flows differently, such as a world in which Germany wins World War II and becomes the global superpower, or a person named Richard arrives in America instead of Columbus! Authors unleash their imaginations, crafting what's known as "alternative history," filling it with fantastic, captivating scenarios.

What Patricia Crone presents in her books is not far from this at all!

Let us consider her words, in which she denies the entire history of a nation of billions who have lived, eaten, traveled, and written about their lives for over 1,400 years, made pilgrimage in their millions to the well-known Makkah that every basic student of history, and even Roman and Greek historians before the emergence of Islam, recognizes. She writes:

"It is obvious that if the Meccans were middlemen on a long-distance trade route of the kind described in the secondary sources, they ought to have left some trace in the writings of their clients. Greek and Roman authors wrote at length about the South Arabians who supplied them with incense in ancient times, giving information about their cities, tribes, political systems, and trading caravans. In the sixth century CE, they also wrote about Ethiopia and Adulis. The political and religious conditions of Arabia in the sixth century CE attracted considerable attention to Arab affairs. Yet there is no mention at all of Quraysh and its commercial center in any Greek,

Latin, Syriac, Aramaic, or Coptic writings—or any other writings produced outside Arabia before the Islamic conquests”[1].

This passage summarizes what the Danish Orientalist Patricia Crone (born 1945, died 2015) concluded in her book *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam,* published in 1987. In it, she attempted to prove that Muḥammad’s emergence took place in *Balqāʾ*, located in northwestern Arabia near Greater Syria, rather than in Makkah!

For those unfamiliar with Patricia Crone’s history, this book was her second attempt to distort Islamic history, following the *disastrous failure* of her first book, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*, co-authored with Michael A. Cook and published in 1977. The term “Hagarism” is derived from the name of Lady Hājar (Hagar). This book earned her accolades from Christian organizations hostile to Islam and led to her being appointed as a lecturer in Islamic history and as a fellow of Jesus College that same year.

In *Hagarism*, she claimed, with breathtaking disregard, that the term “Muhājirūn” (the emigrants) was not, as Muslims and the world know it today (those who emigrated from Makkah to Madīnah), but was instead derived from Hājar, whom Prophet Ibrāhīm left with her infant son in the desert! According to her argument, Islam was nothing more than a collaboration between some Jewish and Christian Arabs to restore this “Hagarite” presence in the Arabian region! She claimed it was merely a facet of nationalist revolts—a position that contradicts her own books and articles, where she concocts entirely different stories about Islam!

Thus, we can understand why she titled her book *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*, for she was indeed fabricating an alternative history of Islam—one that no one has ever claimed. Truly, it is the stuff of parallel worlds and alternative history, just as we noted earlier.

Nonsense remains nonsense

This is a famous saying by the mathematician and philosopher of science, John Lennox, in response to the absurd claims of the atheist physicist Stephen Hawking, who argued that the universe created itself without a Creator. (Just imagine saying “A created B,” meaning that A existed before B, but then claiming A is B itself—how could that be?). Lennox put it succinctly: “Nonsense remains nonsense, even when talked by world-famous scientists”[2].

If such nonsense can be spoken by “world-famous scientists,” what should we say about people like Patricia Crone and her colleague Michael Cook? They only gained their notoriety by coming

(1) Patricia Crone, Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam (Princeton, U.S.A: Princeton University Press, 1987), p.134

(2) John Lennox, “God and Stephen Hawking: whose design is it anyway?”, 2011, p. 32

up with bizarre ideas that clash with historical facts, relying on the principle of "oppose and you will be known"!

To grasp the true standing of such *eccentric* works in the eyes of real scholars and experts, imagine that Patricia and Michael and their ilk among the Orientalists represent a ratio of 1 to 100,000 in comparison to the vast body of Western books and studies that have been published (and continue to be) on the subject of Arab history, the history of Arab cities during the Greek and Roman eras, Islamic history since the advent of the Prophet and his Companions, the history of Makkah before Islam, the pre-Islamic Arabs, and even the development of the Arabic language and its script before Islam...

Scholarly Criticism of Hagarism

1. The German professor Josef van Ess described the book, within less than a year of its release, as simply an "experiment"[1]. Van Ess is a scholar with an extensive background in Islamic studies at major universities worldwide and a recipient of the prestigious WOCMES (World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies) award in 2010.

By describing it as an "experiment," he meant that what the authors presented was not based on true scholarly foundations, but was instead a reckless venture driven by preconceptions rather than neutrality. On the same page, he affirmed that refuting Hagarism was unnecessary because the authors had made no effort to substantiate the details of their assumptions! They merely offered new interpretations from their imaginations of well-known facts (such as the description of the *Muhājirūn*). Thus, their methodology was catastrophic when it intentionally turned well-established truths on their heads[2].

He meant that if we were to apply this childish method to all well-established historical truths, inventing new interpretations from our imaginations and concocting strange tales based on speculation and wordplay, the result would be catastrophic. Human history would collapse in an instant.

"A refutation is perhaps unnecessary since the authors make no effort to prove it (the hypothesis of the book) in detail ... Where they are only giving a new interpretation of well-known facts, this is not decisive. But where the accepted facts are consciously put upside down, their approach is disastrous."

2. Steven Humphreys also criticized the authors for their misuse (or rather, abuse) of Greek and Syriac sources to support their theories—a weighty criticism from a scholar of his standing,

(1) Van Ess, "The Making Of Islam", Times Literary Supplement, 8 September 1978, p. 998

(2) Ibid.

especially as he expressed it in his book Islamic History. He described (and let's pay attention to his precise description of the arbitrary methodology used by Patricia Crone and her colleague Cook):

"Unsurprisingly, the Crone-Cook interpretation has failed to win general acceptance among Western Orientalists, let alone Muslim scholars ... The rhetoric of these authors may be an obstacle for many readers, for their argument is conveyed through a dizzying and unrelenting array of allusions, metaphors, and analogies. More substantively, their use (or abuse) of the Greek and Syriac sources has been sharply criticised. In the end, perhaps we ought to use Hagarism more as a 'what-if' exercise than as a research monograph.[1]"

And what a method—"what if"...

"What if" can be inserted before even the most well-established historical facts to cast doubt on them under the guise of academic inquiry. "What if Plato never existed and was just a myth?" "What if ancient Greece was not where it is historically known to be and all of humanity has been deceived—except for Patricia, who alone uncovered the truth?" What if? What if? What if?

Do you see the shallowness with which Crone writes to deceive the uninitiated, who might mistake her for a person who respects scholarly rigor and integrity?

Now, what if I told you that, years after all this criticism, a full documentary film was produced based on these lies and oddities?[2] The idea of flipping Islamic history and its truths captivated a popular historian, Tom Holland, who wrote the screenplay for it under the title *Islam: The Untold Story*, which cast doubt on the very existence of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. And of course, Patricia Crone was one of the contributors!

3. Compare these steps of falsehood and bold lies with what was stated in articles about the Middle East from the University of California in 1997: "The controversial thesis of Hagarism is not widely accepted.[3]"

Similarly, we can also say that not every documentary film is trustworthy. The focus should be on the source of the channel, its funding, and its agenda (for example, National Geographic Channel's materialistic and atheistic bias explains its continuous promotion of human animality,

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(1) Stephen Humphreys, "Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry". 1991, p. 84–85

(2) I previously pointed out in one of my earlier books that the people of falsehood are well aware of the immense influence of visual media—many times stronger than written material—and of its rapid spread and impact in today's media-driven world. See Media and Atheism (al-Mīdiyā wa-l-Ilḥād) by Eng. Aḥmad Ḥasan, published by Dalā'il Center, 1437 AH / 2016 CE.

(3) Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report. Los Angeles, California: University of California Press. 1997. p. 47

cosmic purposelessness, and Darwinian evolution amidst the hundreds of documentaries it presents).

Thus, when specialists admit that Hagarism was not widely accepted, it means this happened the same year it was published. Exposing the book's fallacies does not require much time; lies come in only two forms, no more: either naive lies that expose their authors immediately, or calculated lies whose exposure may take years.

4. Since the publication of Hagarism, the Scottish scholar Robert Bertram Serjeant noticed that it was written not only out of hostility towards Islam but also out of hostility towards Arabs. He even described it as laughably superficial.

"Hagarism ... is not only bitterly anti-Islamic in tone, but anti-Arabian. Its superficial fancies are so ridiculous that at first one wonders if it is just a 'leg pull', pure 'spoof'[1]".

When such a statement comes from an experienced figure like Robert Bertram Serjeant, it means a great deal. He was an Arabist specializing in Qurʾānic and Islamic studies, graduated from the University of Edinburgh, and then joined Trinity College at the University of Cambridge. He also received a grant to work at SOAS in London, traveled to work in Aden, Yemen, before his work was interrupted by World War II. He then continued his academic research on Ḥaḍramawt and southern Arabia, particularly regarding its language and poetry. His notable positions included holding the Chair of Modern Arabic at SOAS in 1964, serving as Director of the Middle East Centre at Pembroke College, Cambridge, until his retirement in 1981, after which he was appointed as Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge.

We mentioned his qualifications in some detail because he also commented on Patricia Crone's second book (Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam).

5. And this was not just Robert Bertram Serjeant's view expressed within a year of the book's publication. In the same period, the American Historical Review—the official journal of the American Historical Association, the largest and oldest association of historians in the United States—stated that while Patricia Crone's Hagarism did involve significant effort, its conclusions lacked balance[2]. This strongly tilted the scale in favor of the critics of the book and dismissed the possibility of it being considered a valuable work in comparative religion.

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(1) Robert Bertram Serjeant, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1978, p. 78

(2) Unfortunately, many non-specialists assume that "the sheer effort or quantity of writing indicates the truth of the content." As if to say: "If it were false, the author would not have put so much effort into it!" However, there is no necessary connection between the two.

"The research on Hagarism is thorough, but this reviewer feels that the conclusions drawn lack balance. The weights on the scales tip too easily toward the hypercritical side, tending to distract from what might have been an excellent study in comparative religion.[1]"

Thus, the more we read the criticisms of experts, the clearer the superficiality of the "academic" approach presented by people like Patricia Crone becomes. And we can also be certain about the *type* of authors whose books are presented and promoted to teach students about Islamic history!

6. David Waines, a professor of Islamic Studies at Lancaster University, says:

"The Crone-Cook theory has been almost universally rejected. The evidence offered by the authors is far too tentative and conjectural (and possibly contradictory) to conclude that Arab-Jewish relations were as intimate as they would wish them to have been.[2]"

7. Let us go even further and look at the words of one of the supervisors of the authors themselves, John Wansbrough. When he wanted to provide a review of the book in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* less than a year after the book's release, he first praised the authors (which is natural given his involvement in their supervision and guidance). However, regarding the book itself, he praised only the first part of it (it appears that this was the part he supervised!). Then he said:

"Most, if not all, [of the sources] have been or can be challenged on suspicion of inauthenticity," and that "the material is, upon occasion, misleadingly represented.[3]"

8. Moving on to one of the most prominent specialists in Islamic art and archaeology, Oleg Grabar, we find that he spoke with considerable sarcasm about the book and its contents less than a year after its release. He described the authors as having followed conclusions and statements they wanted to prove, which forced them into unusual intellectual gymnastics that ultimately bore no fruit. He further stated that the entire structure proposed by the authors lacks any truly historical foundation.

"The authors' fascination with lapidary formulas led them to cheap statements or to statements which require unusual intellectual gymnastics to comprehend and which become useless, at best cute" and that "...the whole construction proposed by the authors lacks entirely in truly historical foundations.[4]"

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(1) Eric I. Manheimer. "Review". The American Historical Review, Vol. 83, No. 1. (Feb., 1978), pp. 240–241

(2) Introduction to Islam, Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1995. ISBN 0-521-42929-3, pp 273–274

(3) J. Wansbrough. "Review", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 41, No. 1. (1978), pp. 155–156

(4) Grabar, Oleg. Speculum, Vol. 53, No. 4. (Oct., 1978), pp. 795–799

9. The writer and philosopher Norman O. Brown highlighted the core of the issue itself—namely, this poor line of Orientalist scholarship—which reveals its true motivations clearly through such writings. He remarked that *Hagarism* "illustrates in an ominous way the politics of Orientalism,[1]" then cited Oleg Grabar's previous criticism and added that the Western tradition of urbane condescension has degenerated into aggressive, unscrupulous, even calumny. "The Western tradition of urbane condescension has degenerated into aggressive, unscrupulous, even calumny.[2]"

10. Finally, and not to prolong the discussion, Michael Morony, Professor of History at the University of California, Los Angeles, stated that although the book (referring to Hagarism) contains a useful bibliography (which means details of cited works and their authors, often used to create an illusion of scholarly precision, despite being unrelated to the conclusions drawn), it remains a thin piece of cultural history, riddled with sweeping generalizations, superficial assumptions, and tiresome jargon. It contains more argument than evidence, suffering from all the pitfalls of intellectual history, including logical fallacies.

"Despite a useful bibliography, this is a thin piece of *Kulturgeschichte* full of glib generalizations, facile assumptions, and tiresome jargon. More argument than evidence, it suffers all the problems of intellectual history, including reification and logical traps.[3]"

The Specialists' Critique of Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam

In this part of the chapter, we will see that Patricia Crone's approach unfortunately did not change even years after her previous book (Hagarism). In fact, she authored nearly ten more books and articles, all aiming to cast doubt on the clearest Islamic and historical facts, often contradicting one another as she crafted a new narrative each time.

However, this time, we will highlight some of the methods she used to perform her "acrobatics" over the facts—methods that have since become a model for lesser-known Orientalists and some pseudo-Muslim figures[4].

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(1) It aligns with what we mentioned earlier about the motivations of a number of Orientalists, unfortunately.

(2) Norman O. Brown, Apocalypse and/or Metamorphosis, 1991, p. 65

(3) Morony, Michael G. Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Vol. 41, No. 2. (Apr., 1982), pp. 157–159

(4) This points to an unfortunate inferiority complex present in some individuals, where they readily accept whatever is said from the West, no matter how absurd, without subjecting it to even a fraction of the scrutiny and critical thinking they would apply to other sources, especially those from Arabic or Islamic origins. This is why such individuals are among the most enthusiastic supporters of figures like Patricia Crone.

Before that, let's revisit the words of Robert Bertram Serjeant, whom we mentioned earlier and described in detail, especially his expertise in Arabian geography, the Arabic language, poetry—especially from the south and Yemen—as well as his standing among Middle East and Islamic history scholars. He notably served as Director of the Middle East Centre at Pembroke College, University of Cambridge, until his retirement.

He said about Crone's second book in 1987, ten years after her first, that it was: "confused, irrational and illogical polemic, further complicated by her misunderstanding of Arabic texts, her lack of comprehension of the social structure of Arabia, and twisting of the clear sense of other writings, ancient and modern, to suit her contentions.[1]"

These brief but powerful words (which we will conclude with here from Western scholars) can be further explored in the efforts of Dr. Āmāl al-Rūbī, who translated excerpts from Crone's book into Arabic to refute them, providing documentation and exposing the numerous fabrications and the contempt shown to readers.

Dr. Amaal undertook this task based on her role teaching *Pre-Islamic Arab History* at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah. She also serves as an Associate Professor in the Department of Greek and Roman History at the same university, and she currently teaches at the Faculty of Archaeology and Tourist Guidance at the University of Science and Technology, in 6th of October City, Egypt.

She obtained permission from Patricia Crone to translate the book, though Crone likely did not expect that the permission would be used to critique her work. When Dr. Amaal's responses were published—by God's grace—and even translated into English, Crone subsequently removed her personal details from the internet, leaving only her email address, as Dr. Amaal mentioned in the introduction to her book (pp. 8-9).

The title of the translated work, for those interested in finding and sharing it, is: *Amaal Muhammad al-Roubi – A Response to Patricia Crone's Book (Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam).*

The Arabic response was published by the National Translation Project of the Supreme Council of Culture in Egypt. The response was reviewed by Professor Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Bakr, former President of the Egyptian Antiquities Authority, Professor of Ancient History, and former Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Zagazig University, as well as the Dean of the Faculty of Tourism and Archaeology at Misr University for Science and Technology. Dr. Āmāl al-Rūbī summarized the methods Crone used to distort historical facts as follows (we'll present them here to illustrate how such figures operate):

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(1) Robert Bertram Serjeant, "Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam: Misconceptions and Flawed Polemics", Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1990, p.472

Seven Methods Patricia Crone Used to Distort Historical Facts

1. She outright rejected all historically and geographically established information about the location of Makkah. By manipulating the meanings of ancient references to the name of Makkah in Greek and Roman sources, she nonchalantly relocated Makkah to the far northwest of the Arabian Peninsula! (Dr. Āmāl, p. 5).
2. She claimed that people before Islam did not perform Ḥajj (pilgrimage) to Makkah as widely known, but rather traveled to the three markets in that region (ʿUkāẓ, Dhū al-Majāz, and Majinnah). She deliberately omitted any mention of the rituals of *Ṭawāf* (circumambulation) and *Talbiyah* (devotional chanting), exploiting the ignorance of non-Muslim readers (Dr. Āmāl, p. 5).
3. Crone rejected the description of Makkah as a hub of pre-Islamic trade located strategically between the winter and summer trade routes (to Yemen and Syria). She dismissed all classical Islamic sources of *Tafsīr* (Qurʾānic commentary), history, and *Sīrah* (Prophetic biography) (Dr. Āmāl, p. 5).
4. Crone claimed that the Prophet Muḥammad's call to Islam began in the north of the Ḥijāz, in the location to which she moved, Makkah, not in its historically known location (Dr. Āmāl, p. 6).
5. She manipulated the phases of the Battle of Badr (the first, second, and third, or "major" Badr) to suggest to readers that it took place in a different location from the one known and mentioned in the Qurʾān. She even contradicted herself, first admitting that the location had not changed, then accusing others of altering it! (Dr. Āmāl, p. 6).
6. Crone replaced the reasons for the spread of Islam—such as justice, truthfulness, monotheism, and high moral character—with the claim that it was driven by "Arab nationalism," an idea that did not even exist among the Arabs in the seventh century CE during Islam's emergence! (Dr. Āmāl, p. 7).
7. In this book, Crone could not hide her contempt for Islam as she had tried to do in her earlier writings. Instead, she resorted to mockery and ridicule of the Arabs and the Prophet, and did not bother to provide accurate verse references (a serious academic failing), unlike her precision with other texts[1] (Dr. Āmāl, p. 7).

But let's examine some practical examples of how Patricia Crone manipulated names and locations, so we can understand the intellectual gymnastics present in her books, which are being taught in European universities as "scholarship"!

(1) This is the most dangerous method, as we mentioned earlier, for promoting falsehood. A person might not accept what someone says while mocking them, but they may accept it if it is presented in a seemingly neutral and deceptive context, even if it is a lie.

Examples of Manipulating Makkah's Names and Descriptions

It is commonly known, even to those with basic knowledge, that names undergo changes in spelling and pronunciation when translated into other languages. No one can accurately trace them without consulting the original name and understanding its history. For instance, the city of al-Qāhirah is written as Cairo in English and pronounced "Kaīro," which differs greatly from its Arabic pronunciation. Even more striking is how the name Miṣr (Egypt) is translated into English as Egypt, pronounced "Eejipt," derived from the Greek term Aigyptos, which is even further removed from the original pronunciation. The same applies to many names of countries, cities, and even famous Muslim scholars like Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna).

Now, imagine that a few centuries from now, pseudo-historians in the mold of Patricia Crone claim to rewrite history by simply using her "gymnastic" methodology. Suppose they claim that Egypt is not the Egypt we know today because of differences in name pronunciation and spelling! Or that the city of al-Qāhirah (Cairo) did not originally exist in its known location in Egypt, but was instead in Illinois, USA (where there are indeed thirteen towns named Cairo). They might argue that it was not situated along the Nile River, as Arabs and Muslims assert, but rather at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. They might even claim that it is not hundreds of kilometers from Alexandria in Egypt, but located in Alexander County!

Do you now see what "scholarly research" looks like according to Patricia Crone and her "gymnastic" methodology?

Let's now apply Crone's own methods to the example of Cairo, to understand how she could "move" Makkah from its well-known, historically documented location to the far northwest of the Arabian Peninsula!

1) She ignored all historical, Arab, and Islamic records that trace the emergence of the well-known city of Cairo in Egypt during the reign of al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh al-Fāṭimī in the 10th century CE, while the city of Cairo in the United States, in Illinois, appeared in the 19th century CE (nearly 900 years apart)!

2) She disregarded all accounts of wars, achievements, construction, archaeological sites, and political, commercial, and military interactions between Egyptians/Muslims and others—whether Arabs, ʿAbbāsids, Crusaders, or Europeans. Just think about the intertwined history of Cairo with major states, from the Fāṭimids to the Ayyūbids and Mamlūks, and imagine trying to reconcile the French campaign in Egypt with Cairo's events, all before Cairo supposedly existed—if it were the one in Illinois! Can you see how such manipulation would wreck the entirety of connected historical narratives?

3) And finally, as the saying goes: “If something walks on four legs, has ears, and meows like a cat, then it’s a cat!” This is precisely what researchers do when they assume they know too little about the original Cairo—they gather available information which inevitably converges on the Cairo known today in Egypt. As for claiming there are multiple “Cairos” and therefore their confusion is justified (in reality, there are 13 in the US, 2 in Canada, 2 in Italy, and 1 in France), or claiming that other names for Cairo in Egypt like “Miṣr al-Maḥrūṣah” (Protected Egypt), “Cairo of al-Muʿizz,” “City of a Thousand Minarets,” or “Jewel of the East” make it ambiguous—this only reveals their lack of genuine research intent and underlying agendas.

Let’s recall some recent books and scholarly theses filled with details of Arab history for those interested:

1. Studies in Ancient Arab History, by Mihrān Muḥammad Bayūmī, Riyadh, 1977.
2. Quraysh Before Islam: Its Political, Economic, and Religious Role, by ʿAwāṭif Adīb Salāmah, 1994.
3. The Arabian Peninsula in Greek and Roman Writings and the Emergence of Makkah as a Holy City in Their Writings, by Dr. Āmāl al-Rūbī, published in the journal of the Historical and Archaeological Society of the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, Issue 6, 2005.

Dr. Āmāl al-Rūbī exposes Crone’s fabrications:

1) When Patricia transcribes Arabic words into Latin letters, she deliberately segments them in a way that mixes letters from one word with another, altering the original structure of the word (Dr. Āmāl, p. 11).

2) Despite her proficiency in Arabic, Crone intentionally confuses between the letters H and B during translation, which alters the meaning for readers unfamiliar with Arabic (Dr. Āmāl, p. 11).

3) When confronted with multiple sources or apparent contradictions, instead of comparing them and favoring the more accurate or likely source, she rejects all sources and introduces a bizarre, unfounded interpretation of her own (Dr. Āmāl, p. 11).

4) Although the renowned Roman historian Pliny mentioned Makkah’s land as “the region of the Banī Quraysh” (about 500 years before Islam), Crone objected to translating the name as such (remember our Cairo example). It was written as Dabanegoris region (pronounced Da-bane-goris), and she argued that describing Quraysh as Banī Quraysh didn’t make sense because the name didn’t indicate ancestry. Pliny, she claimed, located it in the south of the Arabian Peninsula (Dr. Āmāl, p. 16). Dr. Āmāl refuted her extensively from p. 21 to 62, citing the Prophet’s own lineage of Quraysh and the likely derivation of the name from “*taqarrush*” (gathering for trade instead of raiding), as stated in traditional Sīrah works like Ibn Hishām’s.

She also pointed out that Makkah's trade was renowned from the 1st to the 3rd century CE, based on the mention of Quraysh's name in a South Arabian inscription[1] from the reign of King al-ʿIzz ibn al-ʿIzz Yalt (Chatramotitae) during his rule between the 1st and 3rd centuries CE, with delegations from various regions, including Quraysh (Qrashtn), indicating trade ties with southern Arabia and Ḥaḍramawt, including Indians, Chaldeans, and delegations from Tadmor and Kuzd.

5) Dr. Āmāl also explained that Pliny described major Arabian regions in section 149, from the Arabian Gulf eastward through the south and Ḥaḍramawt, and in section 150 mentioned the Dabanegoris region and its port Mochorbae (likely encompassing the historical Makkah area, including Jeddah and al-Shuʿaybah on the Red Sea coast). However, Crone twisted his description to mislead readers into thinking he was still describing southern Arabia—even though no equivalent of Makkah and its port existed in the south! So, what was Pliny describing? Remember our Cairo analogy: "If it walks like a cat, it's a cat." This is exactly how Crone avoids acknowledging references to Makkah.

6) Furthermore, she tried to conflate the well-known Makkah with the city of Mocha (Moka), a northern Arabian town named by merchants after Makkah due to its fame. This city was part of the ancient Nabataean kingdom, with its capital in Petra. Interestingly, Pliny himself knew about Mocha from the writings of his contemporary geographer Strabo and distinguished it from Dabanegoris and the port of Mochorbae. Importantly, Mocha was an inland city, far from any seaports, following the common practice of naming distant towns and cities after famous places as a tribute or a reminder for migrants or travelers (hence, the repetition of the name Cairo 18 times outside of Egypt).

7) Despite the famous Alexandrian geographer Ptolemy referring to Makkah as Macoraba in the 2nd century CE (roughly 400 years before Islam), Crone dismissed this too (Dr. Āmāl, p. 16), twisting the interpretation of the name to claim it didn't refer to the Makkah we know[2]. Dr. Āmāl addressed this distortion in detail from pp. 26 to 30.

Before presenting Dr. Āmāl's summary, let's look at the translated image of Ptolemy's map to appreciate the extent of Crone's manipulation of historical facts.

The map comes from the World Digital Library website (www.wdl.org), part of the U.S. Library of Congress, from Ptolemy's Geographia, titled:

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(1) Yamme(A.),ed.And tra.The: Al-Uqla Texs (Documentation Sud-Arabe) Washington D.C. 1963, pp. 38-44

(2) Interestingly, all historians and writers of history know how to reconcile ancient names with their modern equivalents—even Patricia herself does so when she wants, and stops when she wants. We will soon mention her identification of Mount Tauren as the mountain of Ṭayy (Tayyiʾ).

Sixth Map of Asia: Which Includes Arabia Felix, Carmania, and the Persian Gulf Description. This map is from Ptolemy's Geographia.

This is the complete map as seen on the mentioned website link(1):

We will enlarge the left part of the map, where we can easily identify three historically well-known cities: Macoraba = Makkah, Lathrippa = Yathrib (Madinah), and Thema = Taymāʾ.

These are located exactly where they are known today (in the provinces of Makkah, Madinah, and Taymāʾ in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia). Here is an image from Google Maps:

(1) https://www.wdl.org/en/item/2916/view/1/1

Ian D. Morris, Professor of Middle Eastern History at the University of St. Andrews, mentioned in an article on his website dated March 24, 2017, titled "The History of Mecca Before Islam – 2 Macoraba":

"There is a consensus in academic scholarship that Mecca is Macoraba.[1]"

This series of articles contradicts Patricia's distortions and treats historical facts (with respect) that do not know falsehood.

Also, Francis Edward Peters, Professor of Religion and History of Islam and the Middle East at New York University, mentions in his book The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam, edited by F.E. Peters, a complete section in his discussion of trade routes, naming it:

"Group II - The middle section, comprising routes leading from Egra to Macoraba/Mecca.[2]"

As we read in William Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography (1854), under the entry for *Macoraba* (which was mentioned by Ptolemy), it is acknowledged that: "Universally admitted to be the ancient classical representative of the modern Mekka or Mecca.[3]"

Now, the question arises again and again: How far will a biased historian go to deny established historical facts, like when Patricia Crone boldly claimed there is no mention whatsoever of Quraysh in the writings of ancient Greek and Roman authors?

8) The irony is that using the same method Patricia employed to dismiss *Mecca* as *Macoraba*, every proposed interpretation of the name fits perfectly with Mecca! Patricia's theory boils

(1) http://www.iandavidmorris.com/mecca-before-islam-2-makoraba-macoraba

(2) The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam edited by F.E. Peters.,p 71

(3) http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0064%3Aalphabetic+letter%3DM%3Aentry+group%3D1%3Aentry%3Dmacoraba-geo

down to *Macoraba* being composed of the two parts: *Makka – Rabba*, meaning Great Mecca. Strangely enough, it's entirely plausible to describe Mecca as "great," whether during the time of monotheism under Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl (peace be upon them) or during the period of idolatry. As Giuseppe Simone Assemani explained:

"Macoraba, that is, Mecca Rabba or Great Mecca as Bochart thinks; or perhaps Maḥrab, temple, because there was a shrine of the Arabs there, inside which was the idol Beccha.[1]"

However, Dr. Amāl traced the root of the word and presented interpretations that Crone conveniently overlooked. She pointed out that the root *mkk* means "house" in the Babylonian language, which was spoken by the people of Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him). The word *raba* means "lord" or "god" in the language of southern Arabian tribes (from which the tribe of Jurhum, who settled around Zamzam and married into the family of Ismāʿīl, came). This gives a more accurate translation of *Macoraba* as "House of God," which corresponds exactly to the description of the Kaʿbah in Islam. Dr. Amāl expressed astonishment at Patricia's deliberate efforts to force a precise translation of Mecca's name, overlooking normal translation variations (as we explained earlier with the Cairo/Egypt examples). She gave parallels like Egypt (Aegyptus) and the existence of a city named Thebes in Greece, which shares the same name as ancient Thebes in southern Egypt (modern-day Luxor).

Dr. Amaal also highlighted Patricia's manipulation of the Greek transliteration of *Macoraba* (Makopaba), where she switched letters deliberately. She argued that if Patricia had truly intended to represent Mecca, she should have used *Muqarraba* (Mukappaba in Greek). Dr. Amāl documented how Patricia changed the first *a* to *u*, the second *a* to *o*, and doubled the *r* or *p* in Greek instead of keeping it singular—a significant alteration that Patricia didn't seem to consider important, as though no one would review her work.

9) If such distortions can be made with sources from the first and second centuries CE when knowledge of Mecca was already spreading, what can we say about Ammianus Marcellinus, the Roman historian, who in the fourth century CE (just 300 years before Islam) referred to Mecca as the "Holy City" or *Hierapolis* (from *hiera*, meaning "sacred," and *polis*, meaning "city")? Yet Patricia barely acknowledged this, dismissing it by saying he didn't mention the name Mecca (Dr. Amāl, p. 16).

Dr. Amāl responded to this denial (pp. 31-32), precisely citing what Ammianus wrote in his historical work (which was in Latin). When describing the western part of Arabia (which includes

(1) Giuseppe Simone Assemani was an Orientalist, Catholic priest, and specialist in Near Eastern manuscripts. This reference is taken from his book On the Syriac Nestorians.

Mecca), he listed seven cities in Book 23[1]... five of these were already listed by Ptolemy in the same order, the sixth (*Geapolis*)[2] was also mentioned by Ptolemy, though in a different section. The seventh city—which corresponds to Mecca—was named *Hierapolis*, the "Holy City.[3]" Could anyone, even a child, doubt that this is Mecca? Were there any other "holy cities" in this western region of Arabia known at that time?

The Response to Patricia Crone's Denial of Pilgrimage Before Islam

Patricia Crone deliberately highlighted an odd claim by Wellhausen that there was no pilgrimage to Mecca before Islam, but only journeys to the three markets of ʿUkāẓ, Dhū al-Majāz, and Majannah. Dr. Amāl al-Rūbī summarized Crone's distortions as follows:

1. Crone's discussion of current Ḥajj rites and her claim that it ends with *taḥallul* (the release from the state of *iḥrām*), involving shaving or cutting the hair and beard, whereas, in reality, it is only the hair that is shaved or shortened. Anyone with basic knowledge of Islamic rites knows that this represents the *first release* (*taḥallul al-awwal* or minor release), which occurs after two of three rites are completed: throwing the pebbles (*ramy al-jamarāt*) on the Day of Sacrifice, shaving or shortening the hair, and performing the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* and *saʿy* for those who owe it. Even after the first release, sexual relations with one's spouse remain forbidden. Full release (*taḥallul al-akbar*) occurs after completing all three rites, at which point everything becomes permissible, including conjugal relations. The Ḥajj starts with *ṭawāf* and ends with *ṭawāf*, and is marked by *talbiyah* (Dr. Amāl, p. 36).

2. Crone, as usual, rejected the Arabic and Islamic sources that contradict her claims, including *tafsīr*, *sīrah*, history, and *ḥadīth* collections. Dr. Amāl provided examples of this and responded to them in detail from pages 36 to 44. Crone even went so far as to cut and alter a statement by al-Thaʿālabī, modifying conjunctions in her translation to obscure the clear mention of the pilgrimage season (*mawsim al-ḥajj*). But even with her alterations, the meaning still pointed to Ḥajj in Arabic. This is Crone's translation of al-Thaʿālabī's text:

"Quraysh used only to trade with those who came to them at Mecca in the pilgrim season, that is Dhu l-Majaz and the market of ʿUkāẓ in the holy Months.[4]"

3. A key point here is Crone's selectivity in what she chooses to cite from Islamic sources and the *sīrah* of the Prophet ﷺ for her Western readers, who generally do not know Islam. For example,

(1) Ammianus Marcellinus,Remum Gestarum Libri xxii, 6: 47

(2) Ptolemy ,Geography,vi, 7: 35 - 45

(3) Ptolemy ,op.cit.,vi, 7: 29

(4) Crone,Op.Cit., no.47,pp. 177-178

she quoted al-Thaʿālabī because he mentioned markets alongside Ḥajj, allowing her to blend the two ideas subtly without alerting the casual reader. Meanwhile, she ignored hundreds of clear texts stating that Arabs performed pilgrimage to Mecca before Islam, alongside these markets, which only thrived during the sacred months for that reason. Similarly, when she wished to cite an incident from the Prophet's life, she skipped everything else and chose the story of his visits to these markets for daʿwah after encountering resistance and stubbornness from Quraysh, portraying this as the essence and beginning of his mission—essentially claiming that he traveled to these markets from outside Mecca to preach! This is yet another example of Crone's acrobatic distortions. Dr. Amāl responded to this in detail on pages 44 to 45.

At this point, we have covered roughly one-third of Dr. Amāl's detailed refutation of Patricia Crone's claims. To avoid spoiling the anticipation for readers to explore the full work, we will pause here. However, there remains one final topic worth highlighting to summarize another dimension of Crone's manipulations: the question of how idolatry and idol worship began in Mecca and why Mecca maintained its fame and original role above all other idol temples in the Arabian Peninsula.

How Idolatry Began in the Arabian Peninsula

Dr. Amaal al-Roubi, on page 49, recounts what Ibn Isḥāq narrated about how idol and stone worship began in Mecca and its surroundings after the era of monotheism under Abraham and his son Ishmael, peace be upon them. He mentioned that there came a time when travelers from Mecca would take a stone from the Kaʿbah and place it wherever they settled, circumambulating it as they had circumambulated the House of Allāh. Over generations, this evolved into selecting stones based on appealing shapes and eventually into full idol worship.

Their condition mirrored that of other misguided communities, such as the people of Noah, who, over time, began to worship idols representing revered righteous people. Similarly, the people of Moses fashioned a calf with a hollow body and a voice, which they worshipped despite Moses being with them and very much alive. Likewise, the Jews of Elephantine (Eliphantin) worshipped five gods alongside Allāh, as attested by Aramaic documents[1].

Thus, the Kaʿbah always retained its stature as the original and central sanctuary, even for idolaters in Arabia—contrary to Patricia Crone's insinuation that there were competing sanctuaries of equal status (such as al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā), without offering any proof. Arabs and Muslims themselves documented the most famous idol temples before Islam, none of which rivaled the Kaʿbah's centrality. Among these were: Bayt al-Aqīṣar in Greater Syria, Bayt Dhū al-

(1) Cowley (A.) ,Aramic Papyri of the ¡th. Cent. B.C. ,Oxford. 1923. Driver (G.r.), Aramic Document of the Cent,B.C. 1924

Khulaṣah between Mecca and al-Ṭāʾif, Bayt Riʾām in Ṣanʿāʾ, Bayt Ruḍay (al-Mustawghar), al-Lāt in al-Ṭāʾif for the Thaqīf tribe, al-ʿUzzā in Nakhlah for Quraysh, Manāt in Yathrib for the Aws and Khazraj tribes, and al-Fils for the Ṭayy tribe[1].

However, none of these sites matched Mecca's universal prestige. Each tribe might have placed its idol around the Kaʿbah, but no one ever claimed that any idol held greater status than the Kaʿbah itself. In fact, the Qurʾān itself records their claim: **"And those who take protectors besides Him [say]: 'We worship them only that they may bring us nearer to Allāh in position.'"** *(Sūrat al-Zumar: 3)*

This is evident in pre-Islamic Arab poetry, such as Aws ibn Ḥajar's oath:

"By al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā and whoever upholds their religion

—by Allāh, indeed Allāh is greater than them![2]*"*

When a man from the Juhaynah tribe sought to build an idol temple for his people to rival the Kaʿbah and attract other Arabs, his tribe rejected the idea in astonishment[3].

Had the Kaʿbah not held this recognized status, making Mecca a destination and increasing its commercial importance, such attempts—including the most famous one by Abraha al-Ashram—would not have occurred. But Allāh repelled him in disgrace, and the Qurʾān recounts this event in verses recited to this day. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ would not have referred to it if it were untrue, for Allāh said: **"Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant? Did He not make their plan into misguidance? And He sent against them birds in flocks, striking them with stones of hard clay, and made them like eaten straw."** *(Sūrat al-Fīl: 1–5)*

Astonishingly, while Patricia Crone twisted Mecca's name and ignored any attempt to connect its name and pronunciation across Greek, Roman, and other sources, she did the opposite with the name Tauren (Taurein), admitting that it appears to resemble the mountain of Ṭayy (Tayyʾ). This emerged when she tried to present another reference to Mecca mentioned by Nonnossus in a lost work, quoted by Photius, where he describes a revered place, as translated by Dr. Amaal on page 56:

"The majority of the Arabs and the Phoenicians and those beyond them and beyond the mountains of Tauren had a sacred place for a deity I do not know. They would gather there twice a year. Their first gathering lasted for a month until mid-spring. The second gathering lasted two months. During these gatherings, they lived in complete peace with each other and with all

(1) Ibn al-Kalbī, al-Aṣnām, pp. 27, 28, 31, 33 to 43, 45, 46, 49, 50, 70.

(2) Muʿjam Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, vol. 5, p. 5.

(3) Ibn al-Kalbī, al-Aṣnām, p. 58.

peoples in their lands. They even claimed that wild animals lived in peace with humans and even more so with one another.[1]"

Knowing that ʿUmrah was indeed observed in the month of Rajab, and the Ḥajj pilgrims gathered during Dhū al-Qaʿdah and Dhū al-Ḥijjah, and that it was well-known that sacred months prohibited aggression and fighting—even to the extent that a man would see his brother's killer but not touch him—and that this peace extended even to animals with a ban on hunting within the *ḥaram* (sanctuary), one must ask: is there any other place but Mecca and its *ḥaram* that fits this description before and after Islam?

Even Nonnossus's description of the mountain of Ṭayy, which places Mecca behind it, reinforces that the Ḥijāz, Mecca, and the Kaʿbah fall within this characterization. So we see how Patricia Crone tries to block out the sun with her hand, thinking she can conceal it from everyone else!

(1) Nonnosus cited by Photius ,Bibliotheque ,Editded and translated by R. Henery ,Paris 1959, vol.i,5(f), cited in Crone (p.), op. Cit., p. 197, no. 127

Chapter Five: Attempts to Cast Doubt on the Qurʾān

One of the most amusing moments I've encountered in my life was during a debate about women's rights in Islam. The other person, a Christian, was passionately talking about how Islam mistreats women. Among his claims was that a Muslim soldier, before heading to battle, would tie a belt with a lock around his wife's waist and private parts, keeping the key with him, out of fear she might cheat on him or be assaulted by others while he was away!

At that moment, I didn't know whether to laugh at his claim. Did he not know that the term "chastity belt" didn't appear until Europe's Middle Ages—if it ever really existed at all, as even their own historians debate whether it was fact or merely legend mocking the Dark Ages? Meanwhile, the Arabs, neither in pre-Islamic times nor during Islam, ever knew such a thing.

If he was aware of this and still tried to pin it on Islam, then how brazen his lies are, and how ignorant are those who believe him, knowing nothing about Islam or even general history. And if he didn't know and was just someone parroting every story about the oppression and injustice of women and sticking it onto Islam, then how foolish he is!

But there is one common thread between this person and those who naively try to copy methods of doubt-casting from Christianity onto Islam. They do so without even the slightest consideration for the vast differences between the foundations of Islam and the corrupted Christianity, not to mention the well-established preservation of the Qurʾān's text until today. This is in stark contrast to the continuous debates (even until now) about the very existence of Jesus himself.

How Did Doubts About the Existence of Jesus Emerge in the West?

It is well known that during his lifetime, he was not widely known beyond the Jews of Banū Isrāʾīl and his few followers, along with a handful of Romans. He himself said, as reported in one of their gospels: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 15:24)

This was the case for all the previous prophets and messengers of Allah—each was sent to their specific people. They all foretold the coming of the final messenger (sometimes referred to as "the Messiah" in the sense of one anointed for greatness), who would be sent to all of humanity, bringing Allah's guidance that would remain with them until the end of time. Allah, Exalted is He, says: **"And We have not sent you except comprehensively to all of mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner. But most of the people do not know."** *(Sūrat Saba': 28)*

Thus, the message of Jesus (peace be upon him) only gained recognition decades after his death, when his disciples carried news of him to different lands. This contrasts sharply with Prophet Muḥammad (), whose impact shook the Arabian Peninsula and beyond during his lifetime, as we have seen. He fought, led campaigns, emerged victorious, corresponded with the kings of Arabia, Persia, and Byzantium, calling them to Islam, and his message and the conquests of his companions spread from East Asia to West Africa and Europe.

If we add to this the enormous contradictions in who actually wrote about the life of Jesus (peace be upon him), and why dozens of gospels were excluded in the First Council of Nicaea in 325 CE—many of which contradicted the doctrine of the Trinity later forced upon Christianity—we find that only four were chosen: Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John. This selection occurred over 300 years after Jesus' (peace be upon him) death. Moreover, these four gospels that were selected were not even written in his own language, with the earliest versions being in Greek! This allowed for countless translation distortions every time the gospels were rendered into another language.

It was common for a scribe to add clarifying notes or personal explanations in the margins of the original text, only for a later scribe to incorporate these marginal notes into the main text itself, making them appear as part of it![1]

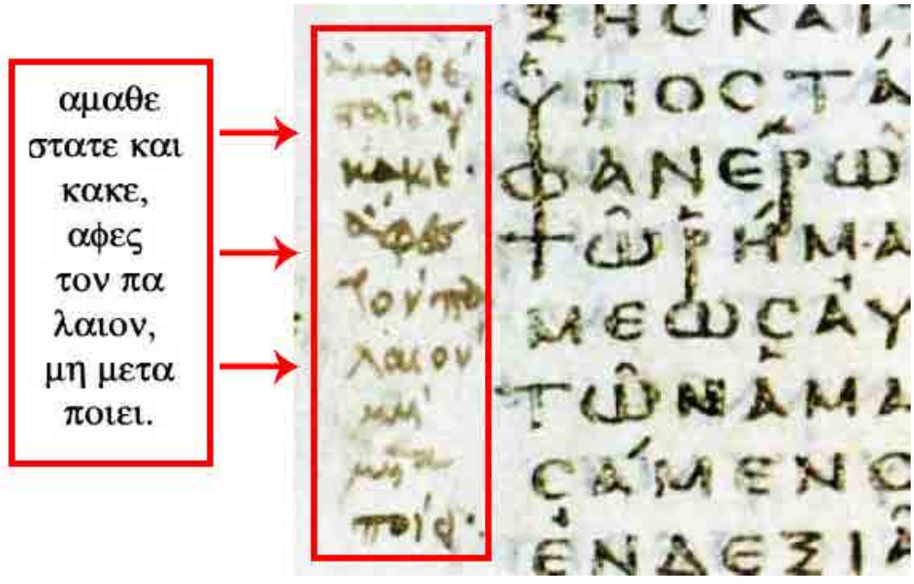
The following image shows a note in the margin of page 1512 of the Vatican Codex preserved in the Vatican Museum, next to the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews—Note next to Hebrews

(1) This occurred either with good intent—due to the scarcity of writing materials at that time, which made it difficult to dedicate separate materials for the original text and others for commentary or explanation, while still wanting both to appear together—or with bad intent, as a prelude to gradual distortion by introducing phrases that would fundamentally alter the meaning. As we shall see shortly, this includes the introduction of the doctrine of the Trinity.

1:3 in Codex Vaticanus. The original text is on the right, written in large, bold letters, while on the left is a note in the margin (inside the red box) where a scribe criticizes the previous scribe who copied the text before him, saying:

αμαθεστατε και κακε, αφες τον παλαιον, μη μεταποιει.

“Fool and deceiver, can’t you leave the ancient reading unchanged?”



An archival image with red lines and arrows added by us[1].

The biggest problem (to offer some justification for the Westerners’ skepticism about the very existence of Jesus, peace be upon him) is that the previous example of changes made during copying is just one among many forms of alterations that formed the basis of the Christian scripture in the first place—both the Old Testament (which recounts history from Adam to just before Jesus, peace be upon him) and the New Testament (which includes the four gospels narrating Jesus’ life and the actions of his apostles).

Barely had the fourth century CE ended, after the First Council of Nicaea in 325 CE—where the acceptance of the four known gospels was essentially “imposed”—than Pope Damasus I assigned Saint Jerome the task of gathering, reworking, and reorganizing the texts of both the Old and New Testaments from the many scattered sources, in order to reduce the multitude of discrepancies found in the translations of even a single text, by selecting and excluding passages as he deemed appropriate.

Saint Jerome then wrote a famous letter to Pope Damasus I, in which he said at the beginning:

(1) The image and texts are from their specialized reference site on the received manuscripts:

http://textus-receptus.com/wiki/Hebrews_1:3

"You urge me to revise an old work and to produce a new one from it, and you want me to serve as a judge of all the scattered Gospel texts throughout the world, to choose from among them, and to decide which have strayed and which are closest to the Greek text. This is a pious task but a dangerous venture."

Then he said: "Is there anyone among scholars, or even the ignorant, who, when holding my revised book in his hands and noticing the changes made compared to the text he's used to reading, will not immediately raise his voice to accuse me of forgery? I now declare that I am a holy man, so perhaps I will have the audacity to add, change, and correct these old books. Amidst this shame, two things console me: that you, the high priest, have commanded me to do this..."

He continued with his lengthy description of the great differences between the translations, especially of the Old Testament, whose translations moved from Hebrew to Greek to Latin(1).

Let us conclude this series of examples that highlight the deep infiltration of distortion into Christian doctrine with the most famous incident: the addition of the only explicit mention of the Trinity in the gospels! This is known as the Johannine Comma, referring to a passage in the First Epistle of John.

Bart D. Ehrman, professor in religious studies and an expert in early Christian history (who later became an agnostic atheist after discovering the extent of forgery in Christian texts), states:

"Nevertheless, there was a crucial passage in the Bible that was not present in the source manuscripts Erasmus used. This passage, covering 1 John 5:7-8 and known by scholars as the *Johannine Comma*, appears in the Latin Vulgate manuscripts but is absent from the vast majority of Greek manuscripts. This passage was a favorite among Christian theologians for a long time, as it is the only verse in the entire Bible that explicitly refers to the doctrine of the Trinity—stating the existence of three persons with divine nature, yet the three form a single God. This passage reads in the Vulgate as follows:

'For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.(2)'"

Dr. Adam Clarke, one of the commentators on the Gospels, confirms this, stating:

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(1) The significance of this letter lies in illustrating the extent of the changes that were introduced in the copying of the Gospels, as Saint Jerome's work became the foundation upon which later versions of the most famous Christian Gospels were built. You can view the complete English translation of the letter at the following link:

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Jerome%27s_Letter_to_Pope_Damasus:_Preface_to_the_Gospels#cite_ref-1

(2) Misquoting Jesus The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why, p. 81- 82

“But it is likely that this verse is not original. It is absent from all the manuscripts of this epistle written before the invention of printing, except for a single manuscript—the *Codex Montfortii* housed at Trinity College in Dublin. The remaining manuscripts, which omit this verse, number 112.

It is absent from the Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Coptic, Sahidic, Armenian, Slovenian, and old versions—except the Vulgate (Latin translation); even though it appears in this version, many of the oldest and most reliable manuscripts lack this text. Moreover, it is also absent from all the Greek Fathers and from many of the Latin Fathers.[1]”

The *Bible Encyclopedia* also acknowledges this saying: ‘Some additions have sometimes occurred to support a theological idea, as happened in the addition of the phrase: ‘and there are three that bear witness in heaven’ (1 John 5:7), where this phrase does not exist in any Greek manuscript dating prior to the fifteenth century. Perhaps this phrase originally appeared as a marginal note in a Latin manuscript and was not intended as an addition to the text of the Holy Bible, but was later incorporated into the main text by one of the scribes.[2]”

This encyclopedia involved contributions from Dr. Samuel Ḥabīb, the former head of the Evangelical community, Dr. Manīs ‘Abd al-Nūr, and others.

In fact, this passage was one of the texts that sparked the famous confrontation between Isaac Newton and Christian clergy and scholars in the 18th century. Newton faced significant restrictions in academic circles and was even labeled a *heretic* for publicly rejecting the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus (peace be upon him). There’s even a German report suggesting that he believed in God’s sending of Muḥammad ﷺ[3].

Because of all this—and to this very moment—debate continues in the West and in its universities about whether the person of Jesus (peace be upon him) truly existed or not. Or whether, in fact, he did exist but has no connection to the sayings, actions, and Christian doctrine attributed to him today. This is what is known as the *Christ myth theory*.

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(1) http://www.godrules.net/library/clarke/clarke1joh5.htm

(2) Dā’irat al-Ma‘ārif al-Kitābiyyah, nukhbah min al-‘ulamā’ wa-al-lāhūtiyyīn, Volume 3, p. 295.

(3) This was mentioned in a detailed study on Newton’s heresy titled Isaac Newton, heretic: The strategies of a Nicodemite by Stephen Snobelen. Here’s the reference link for the study with a download link, the quotation is on p. 388:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231993825_Isaac_Newton_heretic_The_strategies_of_a_Nicodemite

In a recent 2015 study conducted by a major Christian organization, it was found that two out of five people in Britain believe that Jesus never existed historically. The headline from the famous British website Premier reads: "Two in five think Jesus is a mythical figure"[1].

Thus, it is not surprising to read in the publications of Cambridge University a recent 2016 study that took advantage of these gaps and distortions, titled: "It's official: We can now doubt Jesus' historical existence"[2].

Attempts to Cast Doubt on the Qur'ān

From everything mentioned above, it becomes clear how the contradictions and unreliability of the Gospels' texts have led to doubt about the very existence of Jesus (ʿĪsā, peace be upon him). This is precisely what Christians and atheists have tried to project onto Islam—attempting to cast doubt on it, without considering the vast difference we have already seen between Christianity and Islam in terms of the historical reliability of each.

Since there are many such attempts, we cannot cover them all at the end of this short book. Therefore, I will limit myself to just two examples, which should suffice to illustrate the point. The first is the accusation that the Qur'ān borrowed from pre-Islamic poets (such as Imruʾ al-Qays), and the second is the claim that the Qur'ān was compiled and written in the ninth century CE.

Refuting the Claim that the Qur'ān Borrowed from Imruʾ al-Qays

Throughout Islamic history, some poets have incorporated Qur'ānic expressions into their poetry. Regardless of whether this practice is appropriate or not, the famous Arab literary figure al-Tīfāshī (d. 651 AH) quoted two lines attributed to Yaḥyā ibn Ṣāʿid (d. 318 AH), which say:

Man longs for winter during the summer,

But when winter comes, he disapproves.

He is never content with any state,

Destroyed is man, how ungrateful he is![3]

Here, the expression *"Destroyed is man, how ungrateful he is!"* echoes verse 17 of *Sūrat ʿAbasa* (Chapter 80).

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(1) https://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Two-in-five-think-Jesus-is-a-mythical-figure

(2) https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/think/article/its-official-we-can-now-doubt-jesus-historical-existence/065797C131D37B02B7E33E83D5CDA577

(3) al-Tīfāshī, Surūr al-Nufūs bi-Madārik al-Ḥawās al-Khamsah, p. 89.

Similarly, the eminent scholar al-Dhahabī (d. 748 AH) recorded two similar lines attributed to Jamāl al-Dīn al-Naḥwī (d. 681 AH), saying:

Man longs for winter during the summer,

But when winter comes, he disapproves.
He is never content with any state of life,
Destroyed is man, how ungrateful he is![1]

So far, there is no issue here. However, the problem arises with a later figure, al-Manāwī (d. 952 AH), in his famous work *Fayḍ al-Qadīr Sharḥ al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaghīr min Aḥādīth al-Bashīr al-Nadhīr*, where he attributed these two lines—along with other poorly constructed verses—to the renowned pre-Islamic poet Imruʾ al-Qays, who died approximately 100 years before Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him). The source of this claim is unclear, as al-Manāwī mentioned it without any chain of transmission or verification, unlike al-Tīfāshī and al-Dhahabī, both of whom provided sources for these lines, even though they differed.

"Imruʾ al-Qays spoke with the Qurʾān before it was revealed. He said:

'Man longs for winter during the summer,

But when winter comes, he disapproves.
He is never content with any state,
Destroyed is man, how ungrateful he is!'

He also said:

'The Hour has drawn near, and the moon has split,

Because of a gazelle who captured my heart and fled.'

And he said:

'When the earth is shaken with its final quake,
And the earth brings forth its burdens,
The people will rise up in fear,
For the Day of Reckoning will reveal their state.
A just King will judge them,
Either against them or in their favor.[2]'

(1) al-Dhahabī, Tārīkh al-Islām wa-Wafayāt al-Mashāhīr wa-al-Aʿlām, in which he mentioned the report, the verses, and their author in his discussion of the biography of Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Barz, known as Muʾayyad al-Dīn al-Qummī.

(2) al-Munāwī, Fayḍ al-Qadīr Sharḥ al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaghīr, j. 2, ṣ. 187.

Al-Manāwī, who was influenced by certain aspects of Ashʿarī and Ṣūfī thought, failed to critically examine this dangerous attribution and did not cite any supporting chain, unlike the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah and experts in ḥadīth. Strangely, these lines are not found in any major collection of Imruʾ al-Qays' poetry, nor in any known copies of his dīwān (collected works), such as those by al-Aʿlam al-Shantamarī, al-Ṭūsī, al-Sukkarī, al-Baṭalyūsī, and Ibn al-Naḥḥās, among others.

This confirms that the author—or authors—of these poorly crafted lines likely fabricated them and falsely attributed them to Imruʾ al-Qays for the sake of fame and dissemination. This was a well-known and disreputable practice in Arabic poetry: for an obscure individual to compose verses and spread them under the name of a famous poet, or in the style of some of their known poems, to guarantee wider circulation. Any student or reader of Arabic literature and history, whether before or after Islam, would be aware of this.

Therefore...

When the zealous Christian missionary Clair Tisdall attempted to promote this claim—that the Qur'ān borrowed from pre-Islamic poets—in his book *The Original Sources of the Qur'ān* (1905), he ultimately had to admit, albeit reluctantly: "In spite of the Eastern story which I have quoted, the balance of probability certainly inclines to the supposition that Muhammad was not guilty of the daring plagiarism of which he has been accused."

Let us read together what he wrote a few pages later when he consulted an expert in Arabic poetry, Sir C. J. Lyall, who dismantled the claims he had attempted to weave—claims that fabricators still quote from his book today, conveniently omitting his own admissions of error. He conveyed Lyall's view, saying:

"2- This is the opinion of Sir C. J. Lyall, than whom it would be difficult to find anyone better qualified to speak on the subject of ancient Arabic poetry. In a letter which he kindly sent me regarding the authorship of the lines in question attributed to Imruʾ al-Qays, he expresses his conviction that they are not his, giving reasons founded principally upon the style and the metre. I have incorporated some of his observations into this Appendix, and I owe to him also the preceding note. His arguments have caused me to modify the opinion on the subject expressed in my Persian work, Yanābiʿ al-Islām.[1]"

Attempt to Cast Doubt on the Oldest Manuscripts of the Quʾān

In one of the rare moments where the truth triumphed over the prejudice and stubbornness of Orientalists, the Scottish scholar William Muir, who lived during the 19th century CE and

(1) Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall, The Original Sources Of The Qur'an, 1905, Society For The Promotion Of Christian Knowledge: London, pp. 47-50

was known for his studies on the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and the history of the early caliphate, made a significant admission about the Qurʾān, stating: “There is probably in the world no other book which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text.[1]”

Despite the fact that the Qurʾān needs no evidence to confirm its precise verbal transmission, passed down through listening and recitation from one person to another, we will see how archaeological discoveries of Qurʾānic manuscripts confirm the authenticity and antiquity of its compilation, just a few years after the death of the Prophet ﷺ.

But first, let us take a look at the issue of *ijāzah* (certificates of Qurʾānic recitation). When a Qurʾān reciter memorizes the Qurʾān in a particular recitation (for example, Ḥafṣ ʿan ʿĀṣim), he recites it to a *shaykh* who holds an *ijazah* in it from his own teacher, who likewise has an *ijāzah* from his teacher, and so on, going back in an unbroken chain to the Prophet ﷺ. This chain leaves no room for forgery or falsification, as the transmission is oral, not written. A Qurʾān memorizer may even be illiterate, unable to read or write. I have chosen the example of the reciter Mishārī al-ʿAfāsī, who holds multiple *ijāzas*, some of which are mentioned on his website, including his *ijazah* in the narration of Ḥafṣ ʿan ʿĀṣim through al-Shāṭibiyyah[2].

Thus, between him and the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ there are about thirty individuals, as follows:

1. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, from Jibrīl (ʿalayhi al-salām), from the Lord of Glory (ʿazza wa-jall).
2. The Companions (*al-Ṣaḥābah*): ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, Ubayy ibn Kaʿb, and Zayd ibn Thābit.
3. ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulamī.
4. ʿĀṣim ibn Abī al-Najūd.
5. Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān.
6. ʿUbayd ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ.
7. Aḥmad ibn Sahl al-Ashnānī.
8. ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Hāshimī.
9. Ṭāhir ibn Ghalbūn.
10. Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī.
11. Sulaymān ibn Najāḥ.
12. ʿAlī ibn Hudhayl al-Balanasī.
13. Al-Qāsim ibn Firrah al-Shāṭibī.

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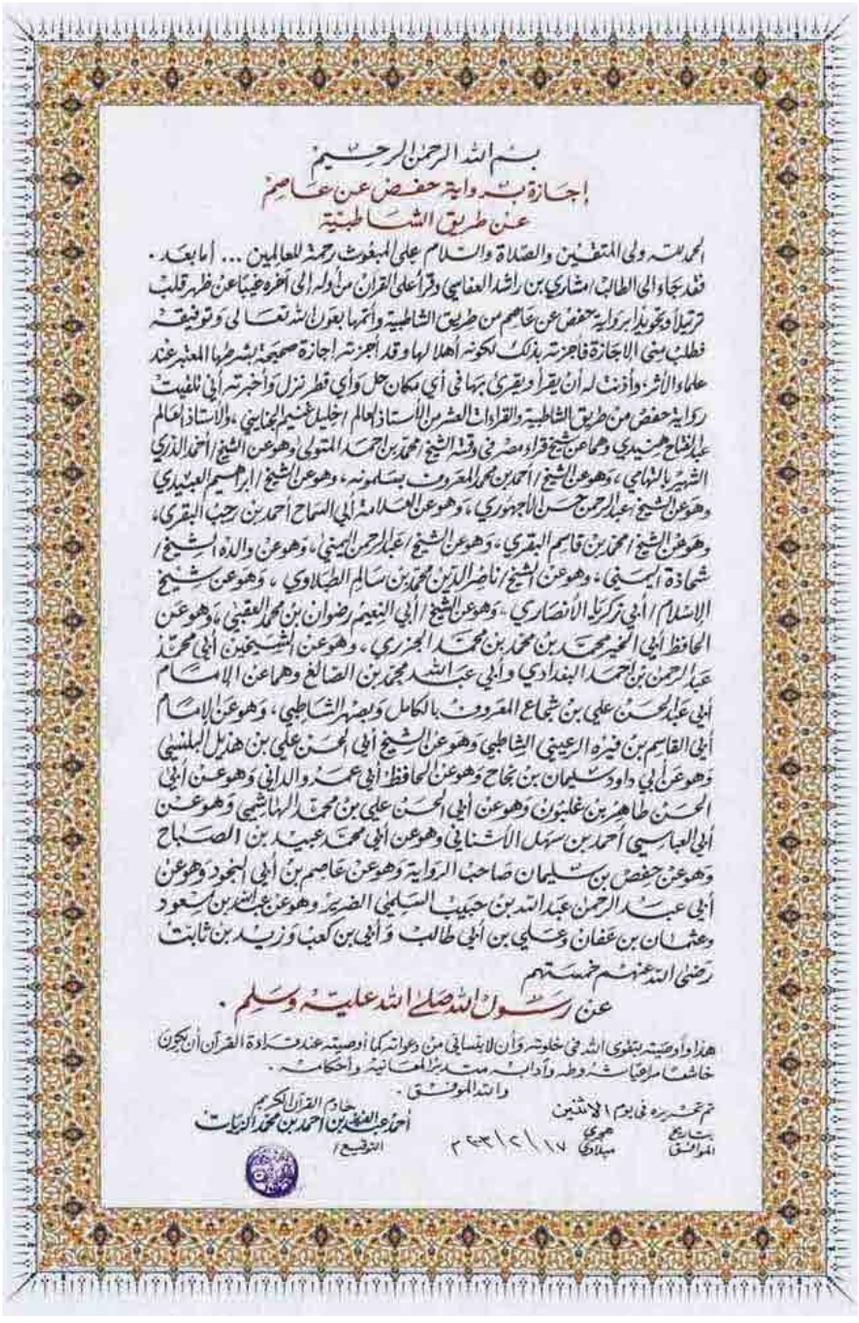
(1) Sir William Muir, The Life of Mohamet, Introduction, p.l8

(2) http://misharialafasy.net/about-us

14. ʿAlī ibn Shujāʿ.
15. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Baghdādī, and Muḥammad ibn al-Ṣāʿigh.
16. Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Jazarī.
17. Riḍwān ibn Muḥammad al-ʿUqabī.
18. Abū Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī.
19. Muḥammad ibn Sālim al-Ṭiblāwī.
20. Shaḥādhah al-Yamanī.
21. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Yamanī.
22. Muḥammad ibn Qāsim al-Baqarī.
23. Aḥmad ibn Rajab al-Baqarī.
24. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ajhurī.
25. Ibrāhīm al-ʿAbaydī.
26. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (Salamūnah).
27. Aḥmad al-Durrī (al-Tahāmī).
28. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Mutawallī.
29. Khalīl Ghunaym al-Janāyinī, and ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Hunaydī.
30. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Zayyāt (who granted *ijazah* to Mishārī al-ʿAfāsī).



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
إجازة برواية حفص عن عاصم
عن طريق الشاطبية
الحمد لله ولي المتقين والصلاة والسلام على المبعوث رحمة للعالمين ... أما بعد.
فقد جاءني الطالب/ مشاري بن راشد العفاسي وقرأ علي القرآن من أوله إلى آخره غيبا عن ظهر قلب ترتيلا وتجويدا برواية حفص عن عاصم من طريق الشاطبية وأتمها بعون الله تعالى وتوفيقه فطلب مني الإجازة فأجزته بذلك لكونه أهلا لها وقد أجزته إجازة صحيحة بشرطها المعتبر عند علماء الأثر، وأذنت له أن يقرأ ويقرئ بها في أي مكان حل وأي قطر نزل وأخبرته أني تلقيت رواية حفص من طريق الشاطبية والقراءات العشر من الأستاذ العالم الجليل خليل حسين الحصايني، والأستاذ العالم عبد الفتاح هنيدي وهما عن شيخ قراء مصر في وقته الشيخ/ محمد بن أحمد المتولي وهو عن الشيخ/ أحمد الذري الشهير بالشهابي، وهو عن الشيخ/ أحمد بن محمد المعروف بسلمونه، وهو عن الشيخ/ إبراهيم العبيدي وهو عن الشيخ/ عبد الرحمن حسن الإجهوري، وهو عن العلامة أبي السماح أحمد بن رجب البقري، وهو عن الشيخ/ محمد بن قاسم البقري، وهو عن الشيخ/ عبد الرحمن العيني، وهو عن والده الشيخ/ شحاذة اليمني، وهو عن الشيخ/ ناصر الدين محمد بن سالم الطبلاوي، وهو عن شيخ الإسلام/ أبي زكريا الأنصاري، وهو عن الشيخ/ أبي النعيم رضوان بن محمد العقبي، وهو عن الحافظ أبي الخير محمد بن محمد بن محمد الجزري، وهو عن الشيخين أبي محمد عبد الرحمن بن أحمد البغدادي وأبي عبد الله محمد بن الصائغ وهما عن الإمام أبي عبد المحسن علي بن شجاع المعروف بالكامل وبسبط الشاطبي، وهو عن الإمام أبي القاسم بن فيره الرعيني الشاطبي وهو عن الشيخ أبي الحسن علي بن هذيل البلنسي وهو عن أبي داود سليمان بن نجاح وهو عن الحافظ أبي عمرو الداني وهو عن أبي الحسن طاهر بن غلبون وهو عن أبي الحسن علي بن محمد الهاشمي وهو عن أبي العباس أحمد بن سهل الأشناني وهو عن أبي محمد عبيد بن الصباح وهو عن حفص بن سليمان صاحب الرواية وهو عن عاصم بن أبي النجود وهو عن أبي عبد الرحمن عبد الله بن حبيب السلمي الضرير وهو عن عبد الله بن مسعود وعثمان بن عفان وعلي بن أبي طالب وأبي بن كعب وزيد بن ثابت رضي الله عنهم خمستهم
عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم.
هذا وأوصيه بتقوى الله في خلوته وأن لا ينساني من دعواته كما أوصيته عند قراءة القرآن أن يكون خاشعا مراعيا شروطه وآدابه مدبرا لمعانيه وأحكامه.
والله الموفق.
تم تحريره في يوم الاثنين
بتاريخ الموافق ميلادي ٢٠٢٣/٤/١٧
خادم القرآن الكريم
أحمد عبد الحفيظ بن أحمد بن محمد الزيات
التوقيع/

These ijazahs (certifications of Qurʾānic recitation) alone are enough for any sincere seeker of truth to recognize how Allāh (taʿālā) preserved His Qurʾān in the hearts before it was written down, as He promised in His words: **"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Reminder, and indeed, We will be its Guardian."** *(Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 9)*

Even if the written script were to change, or if dots and diacritics were added, or even if a copyist made a mistake while copying a Qurʾān manuscript, Muslims would immediately detect it. This is due to their daily devotion in reciting the Qurʾān during their prayers, in addition to their commitment to memorizing it by heart, as memorizing the Qurʾān holds high esteem in this life and the next.

Qurʾānic Manuscripts at Leiden University Older Than Previously Thought!

Before we dive into the details, I want to point out something important for everyone interested in documenting information from the internet and websites. Often, websites change their structure and layout, which causes old links to stop working (and some may think the link is broken when it's actually still there but has changed). To overcome this issue—which I've personally experienced—the solution can be summarized in two points:

When sharing a link from a website, don't just paste the link. Also include the title of the topic, news, or article, so that if the link changes in the future, the topic can be found on a search engine like Google by typing the website name followed by the topic title.

If an old link doesn't open or was deleted, and you don't know the topic title, copy the link and paste it into the famous non-profit Internet Archive at https://archive.org. This is an internationally recognized site, even used in certain legal cases, which randomly archives snapshots of new topics posted on websites, forums, and blogs (except for social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter). It's also a free platform where you can upload any written, audio, or video material. When you enter the link of the topic that no longer works, it will display a timeline of snapshots taken over the years, from the first appearance of the topic to its last appearance. In very rare cases, there may be a security issue with the link, in which case it unfortunately won't open.

Now... what's the story of those Qurʾānic manuscripts at Leiden University?

The story begins when researchers at the University of Tübingen in the German state of Baden-Württemberg discovered a Qurʾānic manuscript in the university library, which they dated to between 20 to 40 years after the death of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in 632 CE (approximately between 649–675 CE). The manuscript had arrived at the university library in 1864, when it acquired part of the book collection of the Prussian consul Johann Gottfried Wetzstein.

The news was published on the university's website, but it was changed and deleted twice. I kept its link from the Internet Archive[1].

The main headline was:

"Koran manuscript from the early period of Islam."

Then, the subheading: "Tübingen University fragment written 20–40 years after the death of the Prophet, analysis shows."

(1) https://web.archive.org/web/20150109220331/http://www.uni-tuebingen.de:80/en/news/press-releases/newsfullview-pressemitteilungen/article/raritaet-entdeckt-koranhandschrift-stammt-aus-der-fruehzeit-des-islam.html

The dating was determined through radiocarbon-14 analysis of a sample from the manuscript, conducted in collaboration with the German organization DFG and the French agency ANR. This refuted earlier claims that old Qurʾānic manuscripts were from as late as the ninth century CE.

The German interest in these manuscripts is part of the well-known *Coranica Project*, a collaborative effort between French and German universities to study the history of Qurʾānic texts—including the old *Kūfī* script, to which these manuscripts belong.

It's worth noting that the results of the radiocarbon analysis were fully consistent with what Leiden University in the Netherlands had published that same year, regarding the dating of Qurʾānic fragments to between 30 to 70 years after the death of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ—that is, around 650–715 CE—making them approximately 100 years older than the previously suggested dates (which had placed them between 770–830 CE).

The headline from Leiden University read: "Leiden's oldest Qurʾānic fragments more than a century older than previously believed.[1]"

As for the reasons behind the differences in dating, they relate to the material of the manuscripts themselves, which were written on animal skin—thus the dating corresponds to the age of the animal's death.

The most striking aspect of this scientific announcement is that it didn't cater to any agenda, but rather provided a firm and indisputable confirmation of the Islamic accounts about the compilation and documentation of the Qurʾān during the caliphate of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (may Allah be pleased with him). After his death, the compiled copy remained with the second caliph, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him), until his martyrdom, after which it was kept by his daughter Ḥafṣah, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ and Mother of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with her). The third caliph, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān (may Allah be pleased with him), then requested the copy from her in order to produce several standardized copies, which he sent to major cities in the Islamic world, east and west, to preserve the integrity of the Qurʾān's pronunciation, especially as many non-Arabic-speaking nations were entering Islam.

Professor Arnoud Vrolijk stated in the same report from Leiden University:

"What's interesting is that according to official Islamic teaching, the Qurʾān was first committed to writing during the caliphate of ʿUthmān, who ruled from 655 to 656. The results of the analysis are in very close agreement with that, or at least don't contradict it."

Thus… news of this nature—belonging to the realm of experimental science and laboratory analyses—delivers a shock (and what a shock) to the likes of the Orientalists who forge history and manipulate facts, such as Patricia Crone and her colleague Michael Cook, the authors of *Hagarism*, which we discussed in Chapter Four. That is why we read, in the same report, a commentary on Professor Arnold Fröhlich's previous statement, which says:

"Many Western Islamic scholars are sceptical about such an early date for when the Koran was set down in writing. They believe that the canonical text of the Koran was only written down much later, in the ninth century or even later. Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, Arabists and historians at Princeton University who received an honorary doctorate from Leiden University in 2013, also joined in the discussion. They are among the sceptics."

Subḥān Allāh… from the same University of Leiden where Patricia received an honorary doctorate in 2013, this shocking revelation came out the very next year, in 2014!

(1) https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/news/archive-divers/2014/07/leiden%E2%80%99s-oldest-koran-fragments-more-than-a-century-older-than-previously-believed

A comprehensive Arabic report on the manuscripts

Here I will present full excerpts from a report on the German website DW Arabic by Khālid Salāmah from Berlin, titled: "The Oldest Manuscript of Parts of the Qur'an Attracts Attention in Berlin."

The excerpts are from the beginning of the section titled "The Journey of the Manuscript[1]":

The Journey of the Manuscript

The manuscript consists of seven parchments[2] (a type of animal skin used for writing), inscribed with verses in the Ḥijāzī script from Sūrat al-Nisāʾ and Sūrat al-Māʾidah (from verse 138 to verse 155 of al-Nisāʾ, and from verse 172 of al-Nisāʾ to verse 87 of al-Māʾidah). The parchments measure approximately 35 cm in length and 26 cm in width. The passage of time has left its marks: some holes, slight burns, and frayed corners. According to experts, it is difficult to determine the manuscript's exact origin. Christoph Rauch, an expert on Islamic manuscripts and Director of the Oriental Department at the library, says: "The manuscript came into the library's possession in 1940 after acquiring the estate of Bernhard Moritz." The Orientalist Bernhard Moritz (1859–1939) had undertaken numerous research expeditions to Syria, Iraq, Morocco, the Arabian Peninsula, Zanzibar, and Egypt. Between 1896 and 1911, he served as Director of the "Dār al-Kutub wa al-Wathāʾiq al-Qawmiyyah" (The National Library and Archives) in Cairo.

Radiocarbon Dating (C-14)

A sample of the manuscript's parchment was sent to the *Swiss Federal Institute of Technology* in Zurich, one of the top ten universities worldwide, to conduct a radiocarbon dating (C-14) test to determine the age of the parchment. This method, discovered in 1949, is used to date remains of living organisms such as wood, leather, bones, and others. It is primarily used in archaeology. "However, its use on manuscripts is still relatively rare," says Michael Joseph Marx, a Qurʾān expert and director of the research project Corpus Coranicum.

Regarding the results of the examination, Rauch says: "With 95% certainty, the parchment dates back to the years between 606 and 652 CE. I lean toward the year 650." It is known that Prophet Muḥammad passed away in 632. Rauch adds: "However, radiocarbon dating does not provide definitive results about the date of writing, but rather about the age of the animal skin used." Marx agrees and adds, "The dating is of the parchment, not the ink. It is theoretically

(1) https://www.dw.com/ar/a-18389664

(2) Each parchment has two sides, and I will present 14 images of the seven parchments shortly.

possible—though unlikely—that the sheep was slaughtered at that time, but that the writing was done on its skin decades later. There are no absolute scientific certainties, one hundred percent."

A scientific contribution to Qurʾānic studies

Regarding the importance of these parchments, Mr. Marks says: "Through these manuscripts, we gain insight into the development of Arabic script. The text, like that of the Tübingen Qurʾān, contains the old orthographic rules, includes few diacritical marks, and lacks grammatical markings or vowel signs (*fatḥah*, *ḍammah*...). In some instances, the wording differs from the Ḥafṣ reading, which is the most common in most Muslim countries today."

Regarding the transcription of the Qurʾān in the first century of the Hijrah, Mr. Marks explains: "This manuscript and others show that there were many Islamic scholars who wrote down the Qurʾān in the first century after the Prophet's death. According to our information, there are large portions from 20 manuscripts (comprising a total of 2,000 pages) dating back to the first century Hijri. This is a large number compared to the writing of the Gospels."

Mr. Marks agrees with Mr. Rauch's view that "the findings from this manuscript will not change the course of Qurʾānic studies and that these results do not contradict what Muslims believe about the Qurʾān's transcription and its history." He adds: "Qurʾānic manuscripts from the first two Hijri centuries are very similar, but they are not 100% identical. Scientific research on these manuscripts has advanced significantly over the last twenty years, yet we are still at the beginning; there are still many open questions awaiting answers." It is noted that part of the manuscript is still preserved at the "National Library and Archives" in Cairo.

Corpus Coranicum - CORANICA – The "Collection of Qurʾānic-Related Texts" Project

The decision to subject the manuscript to radiocarbon dating came within the framework of the large-scale research project "Coranica." This is a joint French-German project funded by the "German Research Foundation" (DFG) and the "French National Research Agency" (ANR). Mr. Marks, the project director, explains its goals: "The project follows a historical approach at several levels:

1. Collecting and analyzing old manuscripts and papyri by determining their age and analyzing their content.
2. Gathering early Islamic readings from Islamic heritage.
3. Documenting texts from Late Antiquity (the centuries preceding the emergence of Islam) that relate to the Qurʾān's environment, to help us understand the Qurʾān in its historical context.

4. Commenting on the Qurʾān based on literary approaches and using texts from Late Antiquity." It is worth noting that the "Coranica" project is implemented by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences (Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften) and was launched in 2007, continuing until 2024[1].

Images of the Leiden Manuscripts of the Seven Parchments

Before we discuss the final sections of our book (which addresses the doubts surrounding the Ṣanʿāʾ manuscripts), I will present to you images of the seven parchments of Qurʾānic manuscripts housed at Leiden University[2] from the Berlin State Library Digital Collections. Each parchment has two sides, and you will notice there are small numbered circles at the top of each side, so parchment one corresponds to sides 1 and 2, parchment two to sides 3 and 4, parchment three to sides 5 and 6, and so on.

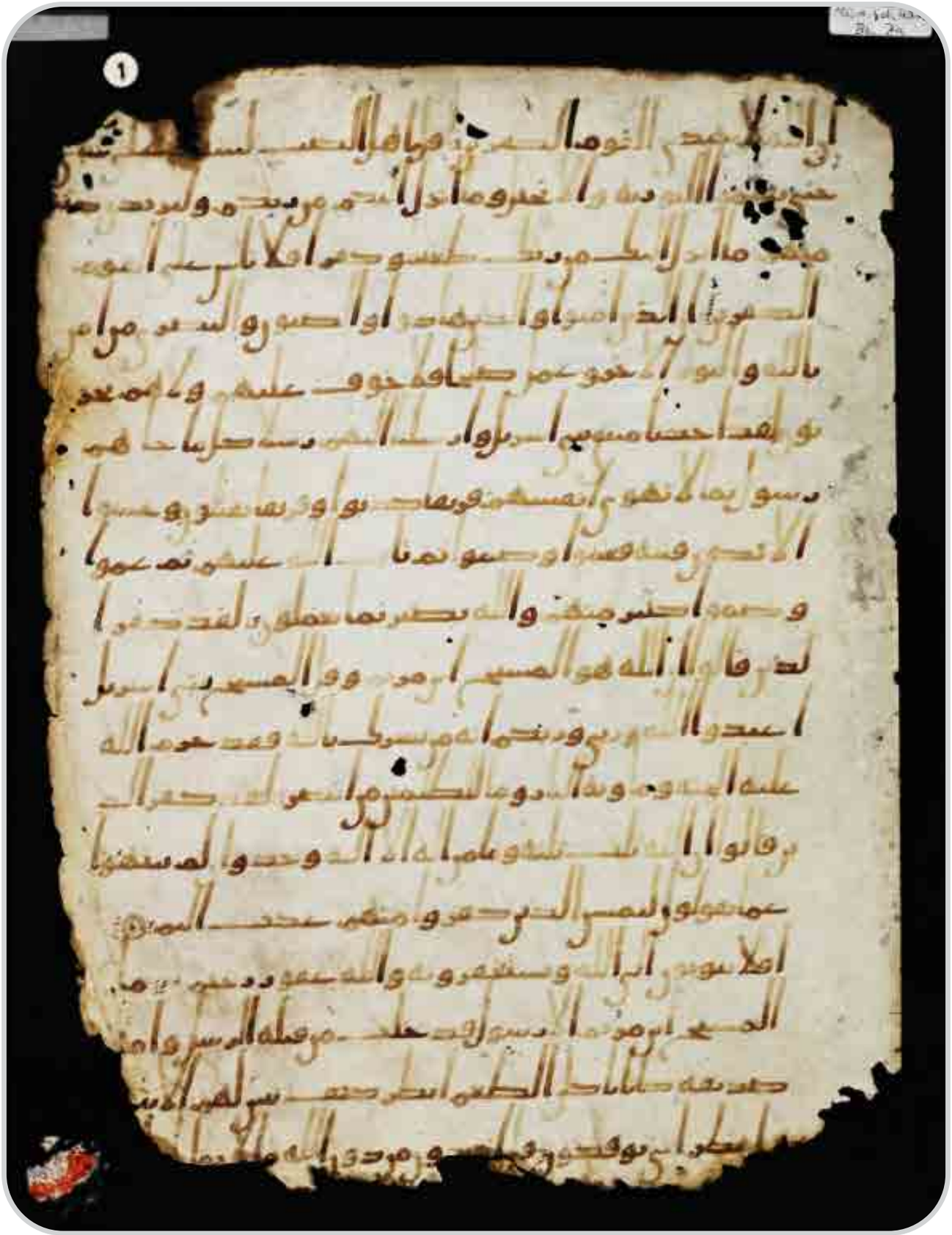
Please note that the website's display page offers zoom functionality for clearer reading, as well as the ability to download the images.

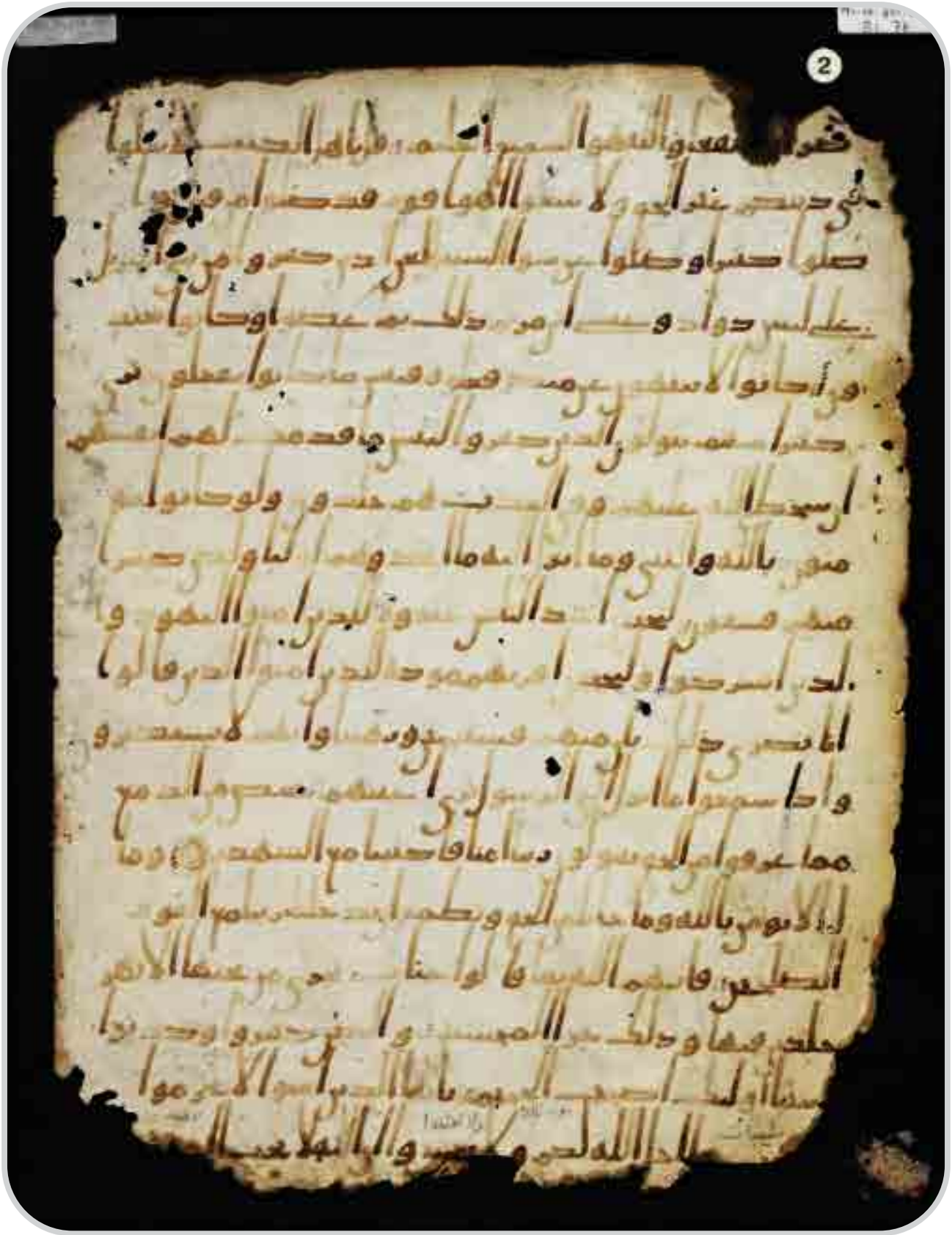
I leave you now with the images, which I have cropped to focus on the display area, which includes a ruler showing measurements in centimeters:

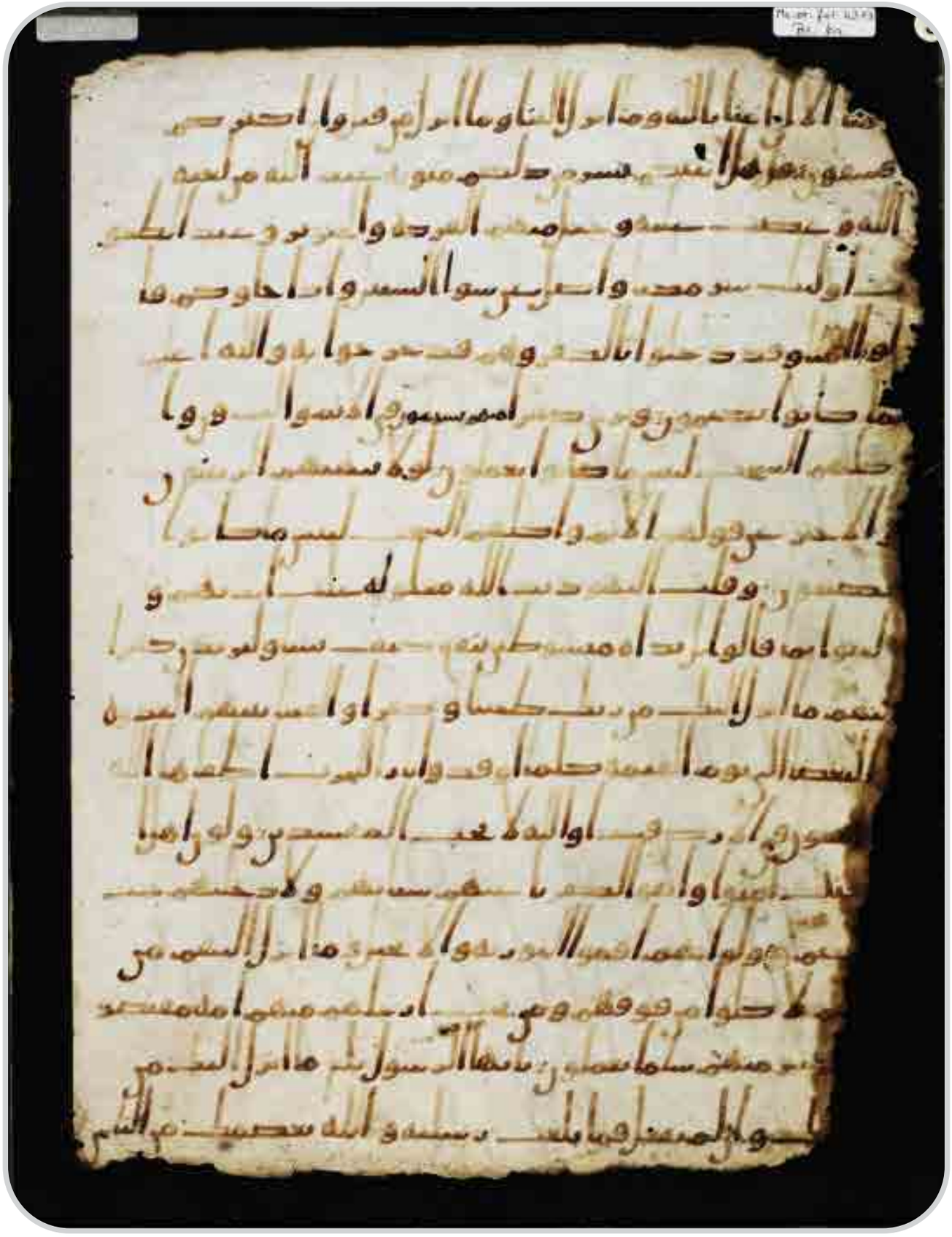
(1) To emphasize the extent of the shock these Qurʾānic manuscripts and their dating represent, it is worth noting that a hostile Orientalist like Schacht had claimed that the Qurʾān was not formed until the 9th century CE (the end of the 2nd century Hijri), through numerous changes over the preceding two centuries, and that there were no physical remnants or tangible evidence of the Qurʾān's existence before that time. Another hostile Orientalist, John Wansbrough, took this falsehood from him and built upon it in two books he published in 1977 and 1978. Patricia Crone and her colleague Michael Cook were influenced by his ideas and went on to produce their book Hagarism, which we mentioned earlier. Imagine, then, the impact of the discovery of Qurʾānic manuscript copies dating back to 20 or 30 years after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, or to the era of the caliphate of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān (may Allah be pleased with him).

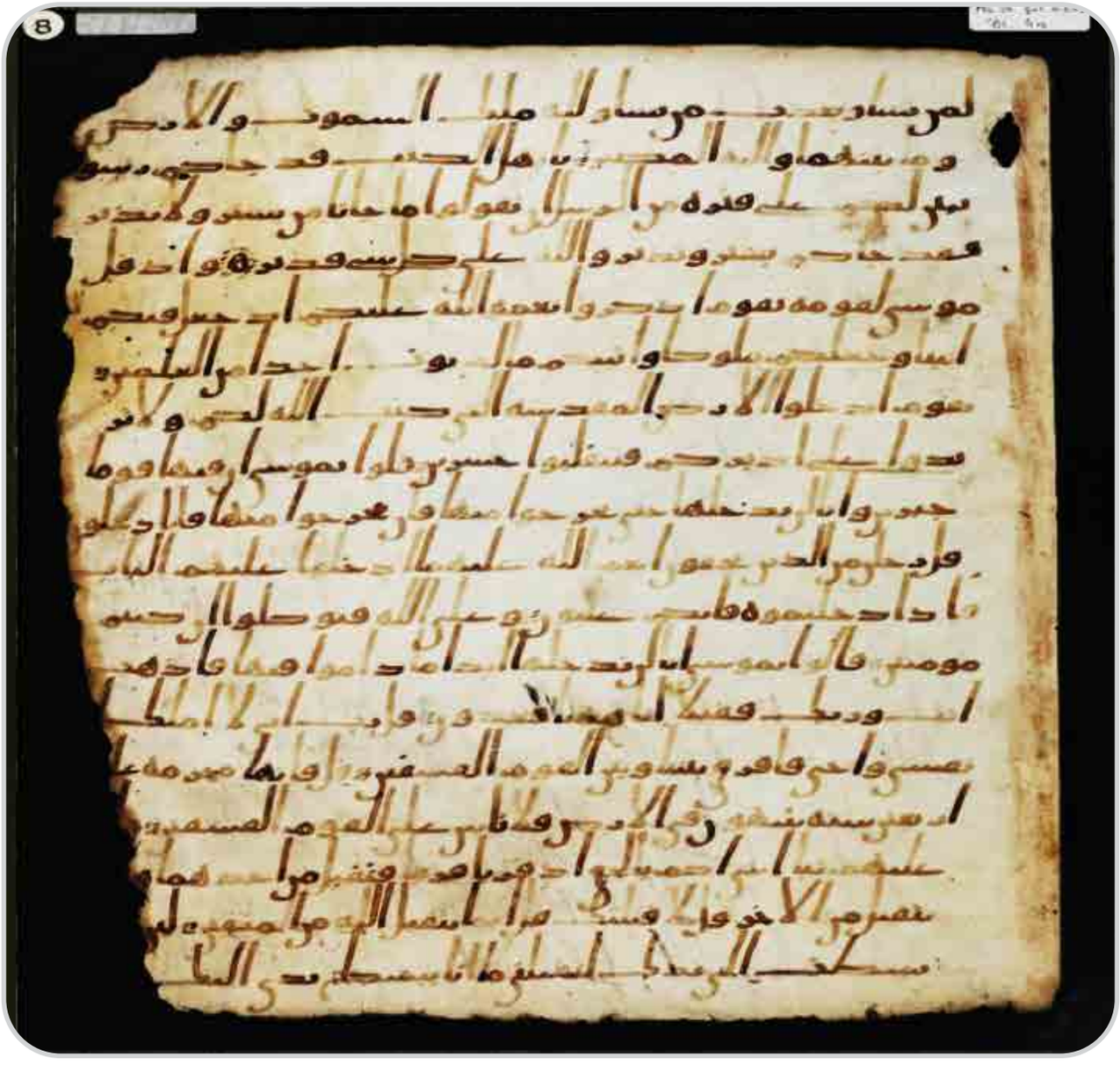
(2) Browsing link from the Oriental Division at the Berlin State Digital Library:

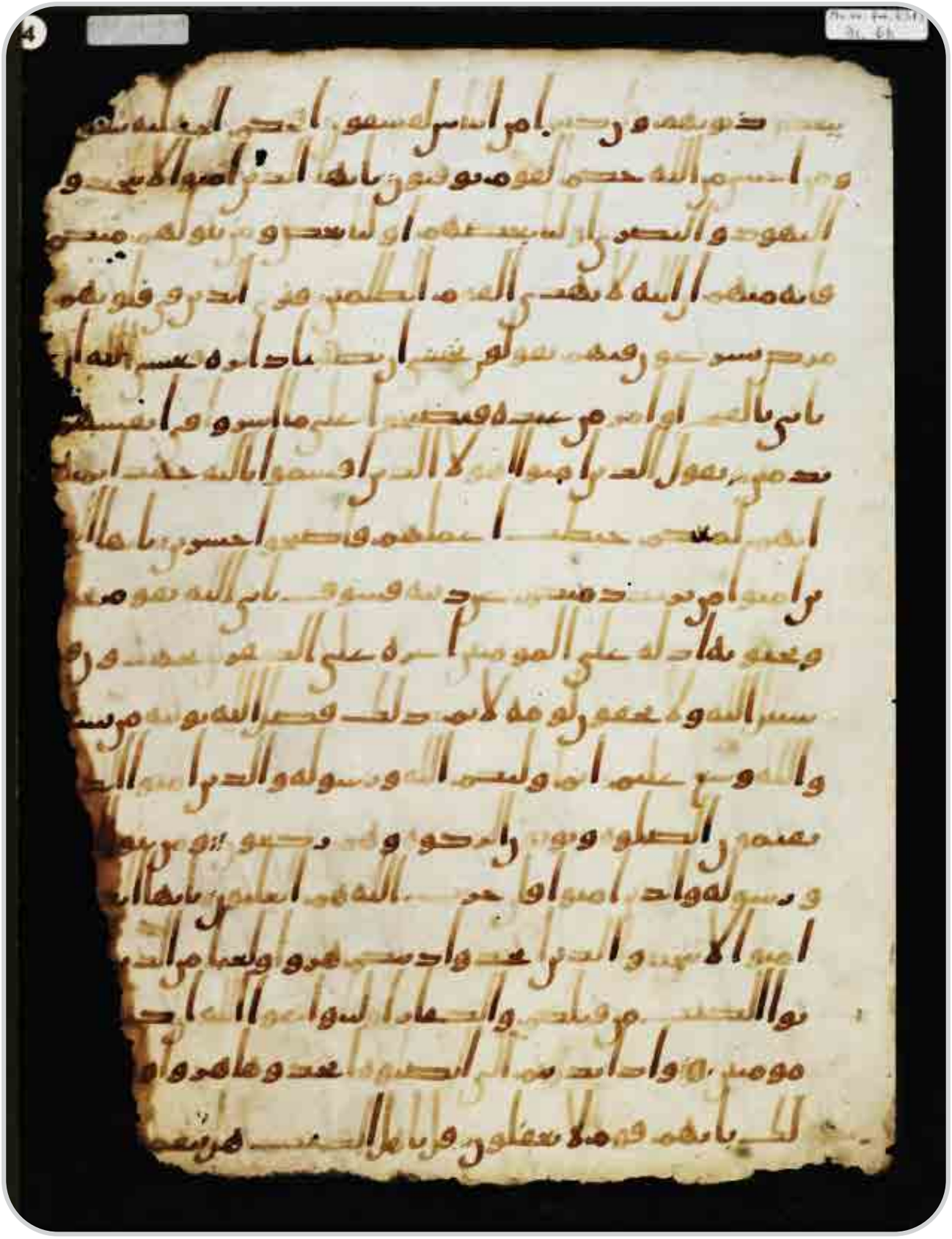
http://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht/?PPN=PPN644463252&PHYSID=PHYS_0001

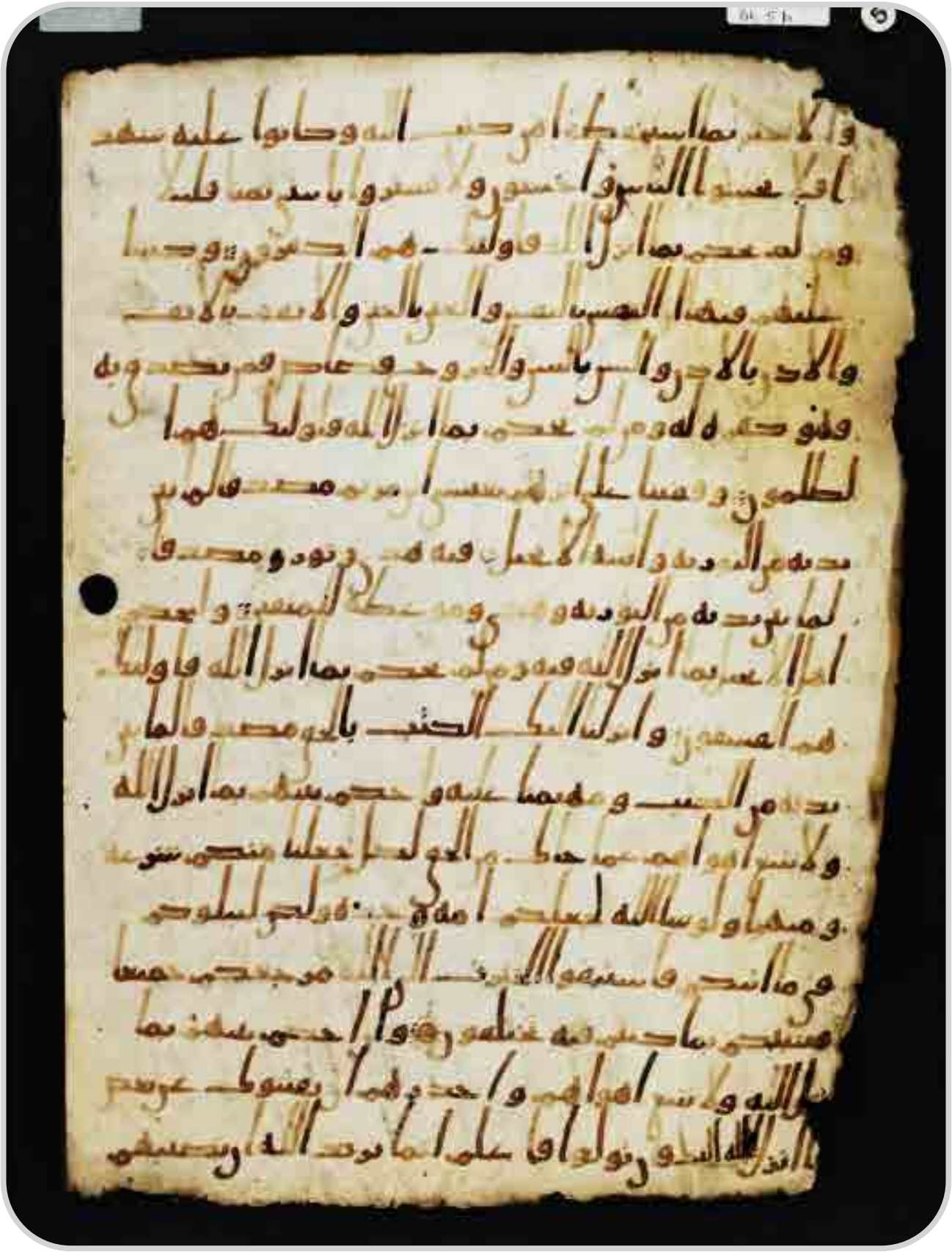


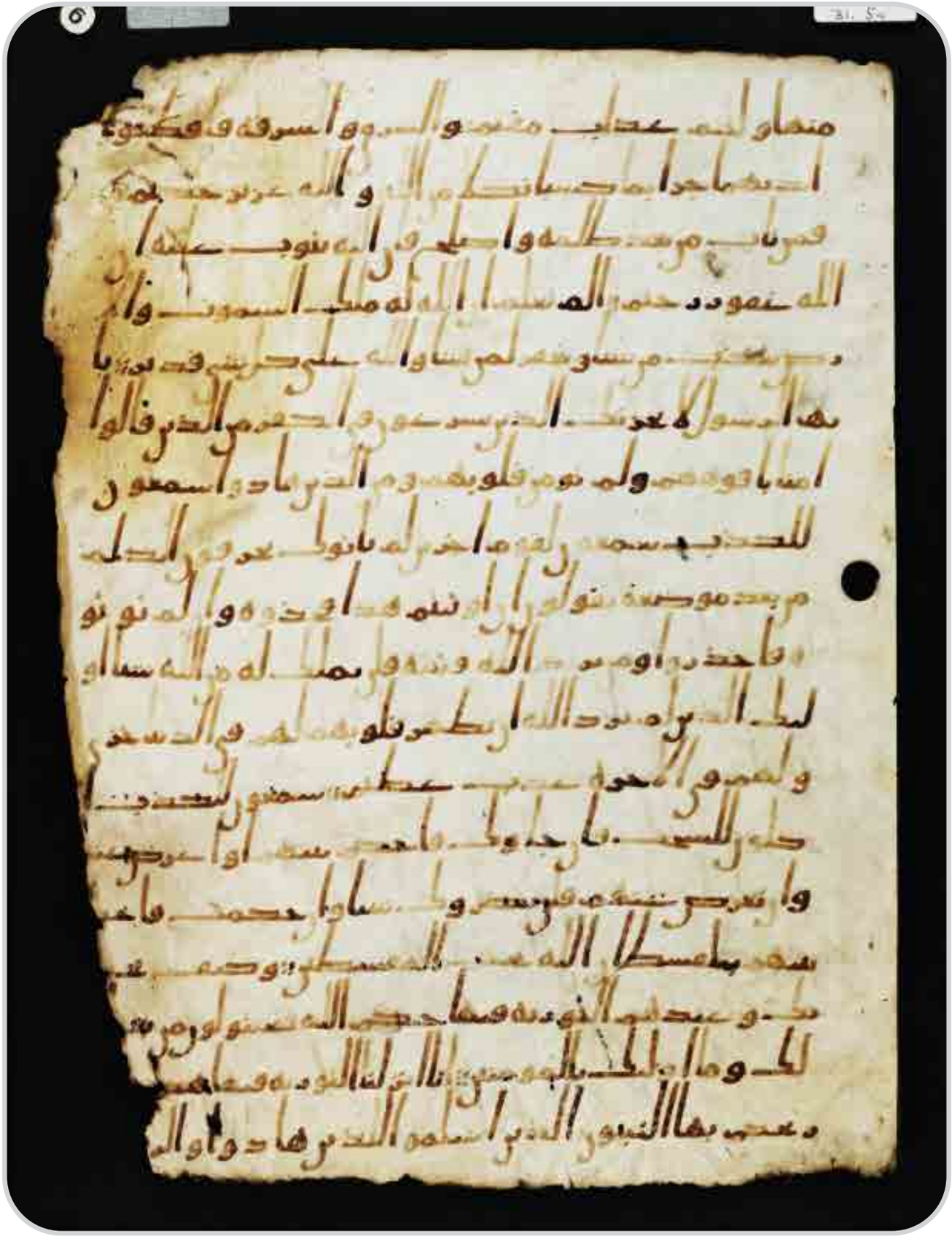


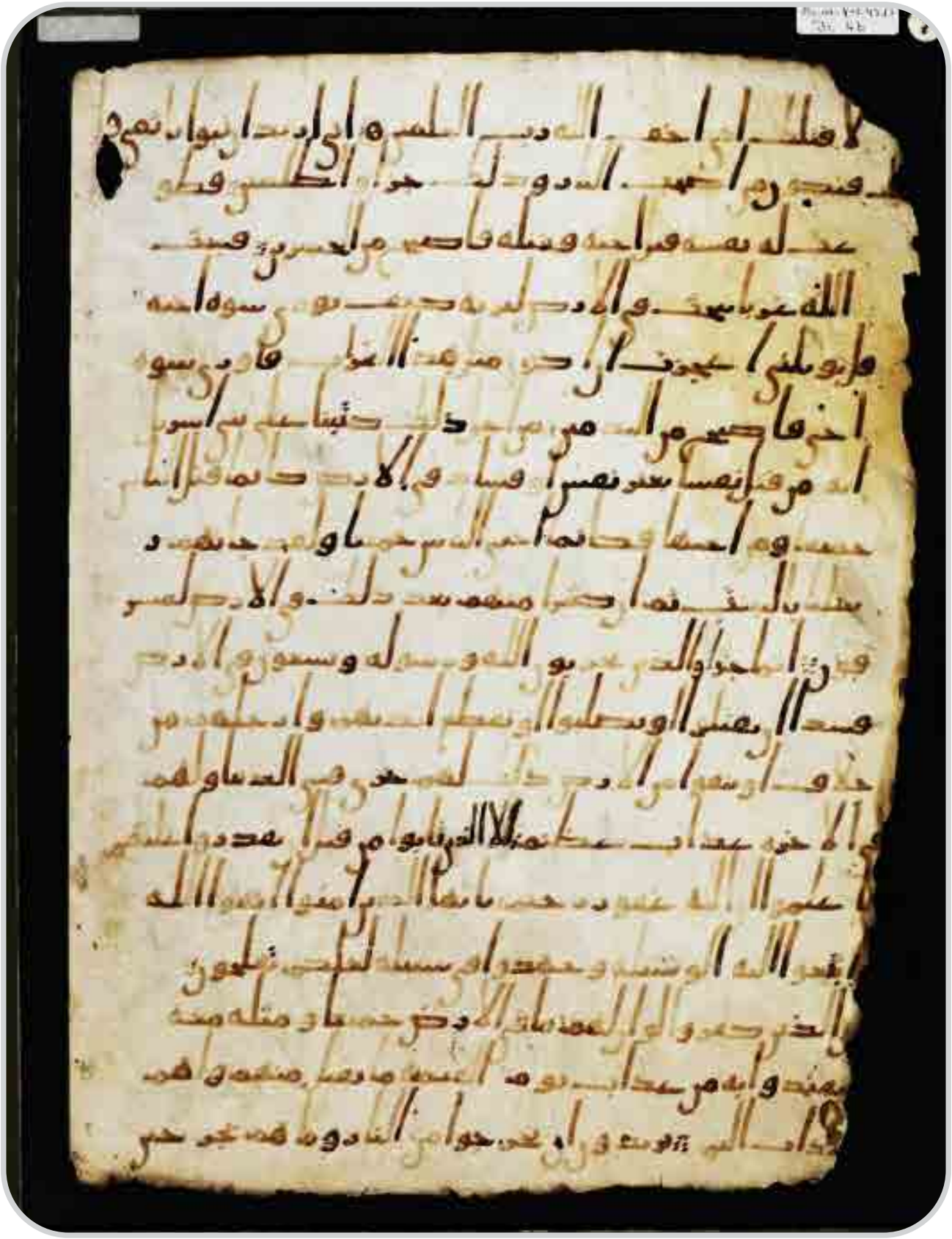


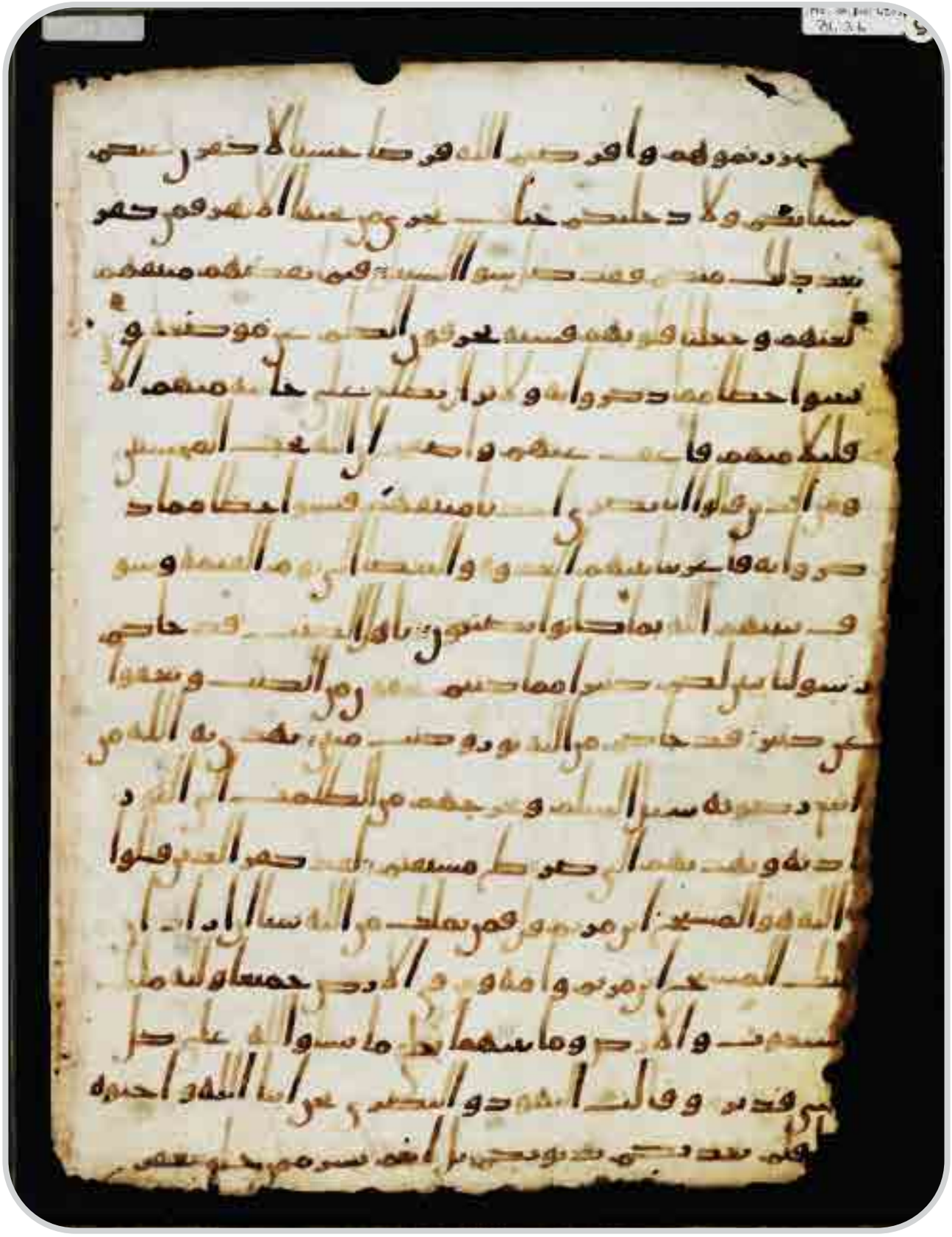


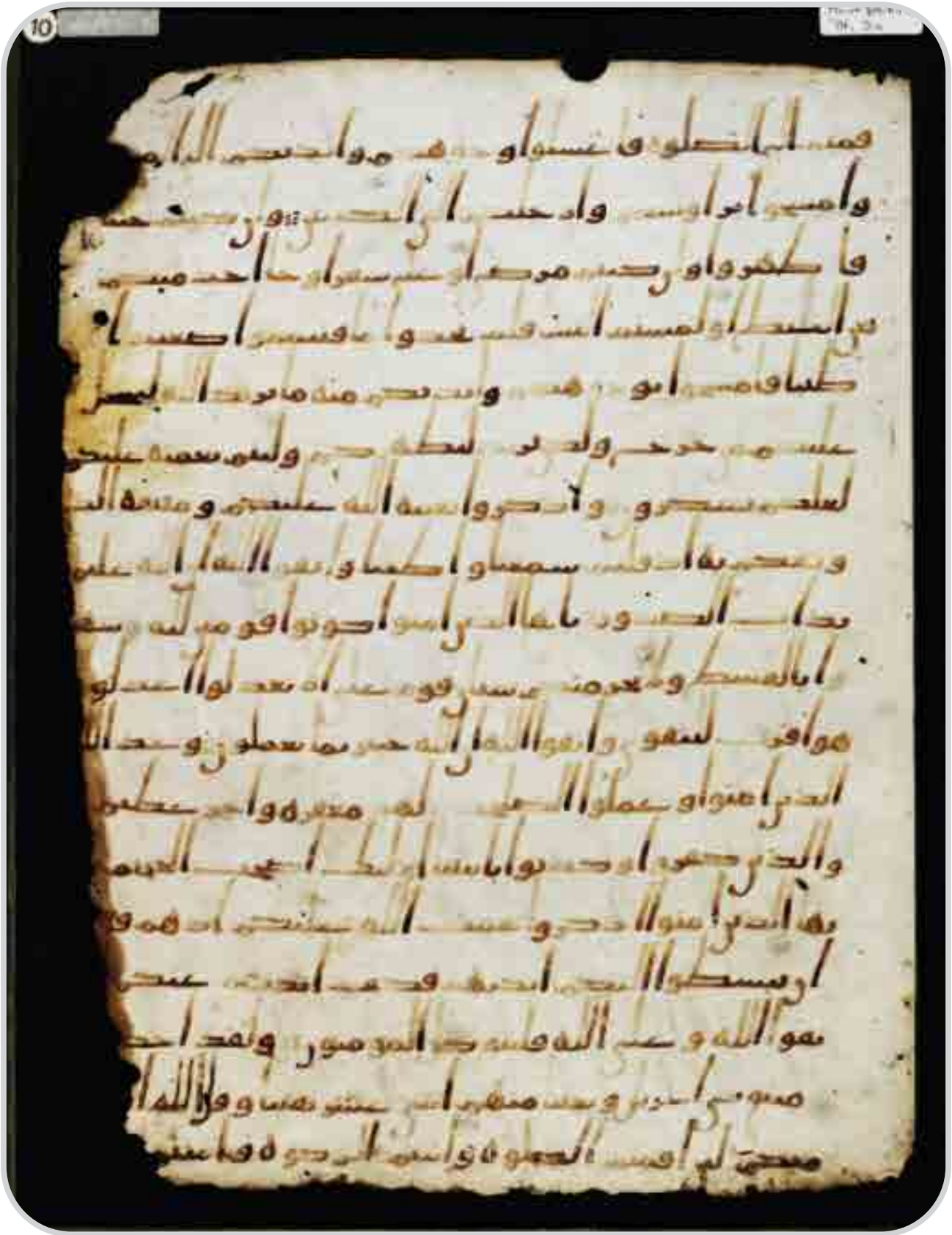


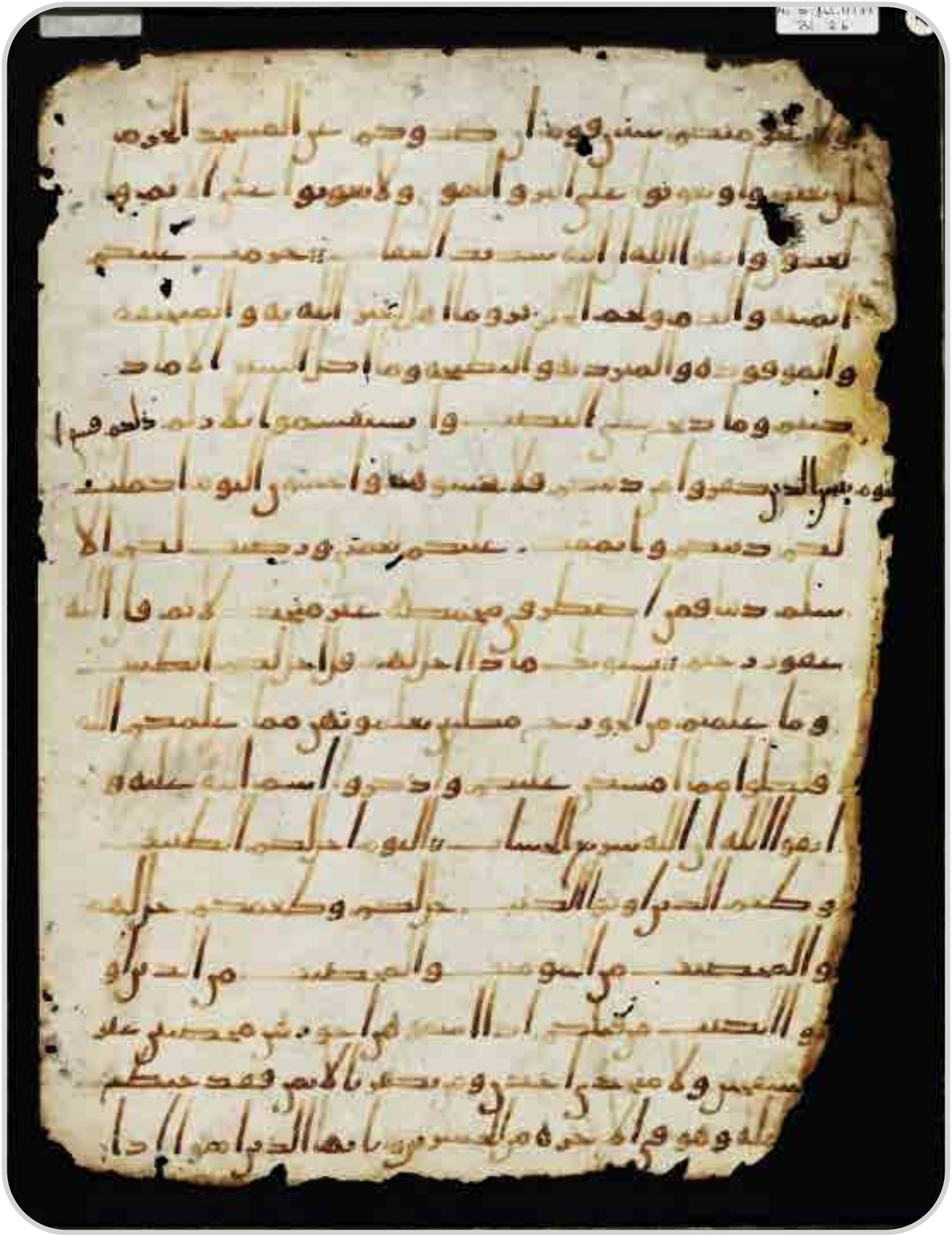


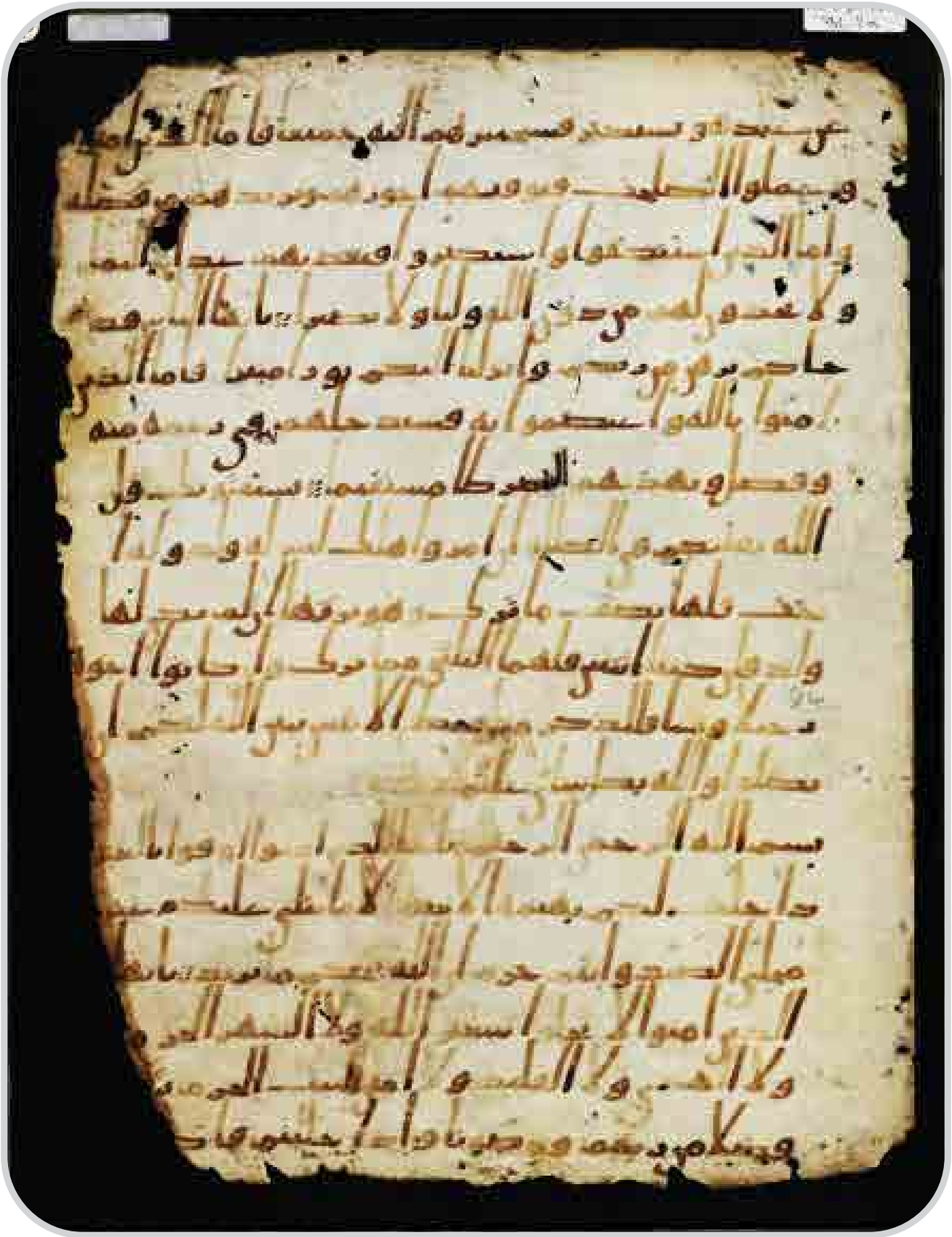












Attempt to Cast Doubt on the Qurʾān with the Ṣanʿāʾ Manuscripts

(Adapted from a book by Professor Dr. Muḥammad Mihr ʿAlī)[1].

In 1970, a collection of ancient Qurʾānic manuscripts was discovered in the upper levels of the Great Mosque of Ṣanʿāʾ.

In the early 1980s, the Director of the Antiquities Department in Yemen, the judge Ismāʿīl al-Akwaʿ, invited two German experts—Dr. Gerd R. Puin and H.C. Graf von Bothmer—to restore and preserve these manuscripts, with the cooperation of the German Foreign Ministry.

Puin and Bothmer worked in Ṣanʿāʾ for several years, and it seems their roles were not limited to restoration; they also pursued orientalist goals.

Bothmer took microfilm images of over 35,000 pages and brought them back to Germany. In 1987, he wrote an article discussing these manuscripts and indicated that one of them (numbered 23-1033) dates back to the last quarter of the first Hijrī century.

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(1) The Book "Claims of the Orientalists About the Noble Qurʾān" by Professor Dr. Muḥammad Mihr ʿAlī, 1421 AH. This book delves deeply into the subject, including extensive quotes from fair and impartial Orientalists themselves to refute the lies of other Orientalists and their claims of discrepancies in the Qurʾān.

Professor Dr. Muḥammad Mihr ʿAlī (Muhammad Mohar Ali) was of Bangladeshi nationality, holding a PhD in Modern South Asian History from London, in addition to his education and graduation from the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh. He worked for many years in Saudi Arabia specializing in Islamic history, and authored excellent works critiquing and exposing the tricks of the Orientalists who attack the Qurʾān.

His notable works include Sirat al-Nabi and the Orientalists (1997), available in English, and The Qurʾān and the Orientalists (2004).

Puin also wrote an article titled "Observations on the Ancient Qurʾānic Manuscripts in Ṣanʿāʾ"[1].

The news of these manuscripts sparked significant interest among Orientalists, leading to a symposium in 1998 in Leiden on "Qurʾānic Studies," where both Puin and Bothmer presented lectures on the Ṣanʿāʾ manuscripts.

Since Puin was an orientalist, like many of his peers, whose unfortunate aim is to cast doubt on the Qurʾān's authenticity to suggest it was composed and written over a long span of time (similar to the claims made about the Torah and the Gospels as we discussed), he began spreading falsehoods about the Qurʾān, even claiming that there were no separators between *Sūrahs* and that at the end of every five *āyāt*, the last verse was meaningless, and so on.

His statements, alongside those of Lester, were published in the American magazine *The Atlantic Monthly*, provoking the anger of Yemeni officials who realized this malicious effort to discredit the Qurʾān. This forced Puin to send a later letter attempting to clear his name from his own statements, in which he said:

"I regret what is claimed about an American magazine publishing alleged findings by German researchers, and that among the parchments restored under the German project, there exists a Qurʾān different from the one currently circulated among Muslims... This media campaign has no basis in what was published in the American magazine, nor in anything relating to the Ṣanʿāʾ manuscripts, nor to the Qurʾānic research being conducted by myself and my colleague Dr. Graf von Bothmer... I am deeply sorry for this campaign that seeks to harm the practical cooperation between Yemen and Germany.[2]"

Puin also tried to bolster his false claims by mentioning earlier German efforts that had failed to compare the vast number of Qurʾānic manuscripts once housed at the University of Munich, which were destroyed by a bomb during World War II. From this standpoint, he considered the study of the Ṣanʿāʾ manuscripts to be a renewed opportunity.

Strangely, Puin deliberately omitted an important fact—that the officials responsible for these manuscripts had published a preliminary report about them before the outbreak of the war, stating:

(1) Gerd R. Puin: "Observation on Early Qur'an Manuscripts in San'a", in Stefan Wilde (ed), The Qur'an as Text, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1996, pp.107-111

(2) Image of Buin's letter in Impact International magazine, vol. 30, March 2000 issue, p. 27

“A comparison was made between a large number of copies, though not all of them were compared, and no differences were found in the Qurʾānic text, except for a few minor spelling or copying errors here and there, which do not affect the unity of the text.[1]”

This reveals that the variations observed by Buin in the Ṣanʿāʾ manuscripts were entirely natural, similar to what was noted in the preliminary report by the University of Munich about them (which is completely natural, given that the manuscripts were housed in a Qurʾān memorization school on the upper floor of the Great Mosque in Ṣanʿāʾ).

Especially since it has always been customary among Muslims (and continues to this day) during memorization to correct and make adjustments in the same wooden tablet, and also that some Muslims would collect selected memorized verses from different *Sūrahs* onto a single board (such as specific verses about supplications or the *Sūrahs* recommended for daily recitation, which are not consecutive in the order of the *Muṣḥaf*).

This has never caused any concern among Muslims, as they have known this practice for centuries.

It only appears as a simplistic accusation from people like Buin among the Orientalists.

(1) Muḥammad Ḥamīdullāh, Bahawalpur Lectures (in Urdu), Islamic Research, Islamabad, 1985, pp. 20-21, quoted in Impact International magazine, London, March 2000, p. 28

Archaeology of Islam

Traces of Makkah, Islam, and Its Earliest Accounts

Compiled and Annotated by: Aḥmad Ḥasan

Translated by: Abdullah Sueidi

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